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SEA FISHING MAGAZINE

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We enter the New Year with fresh hopes and aspirations. I am sure most of you made resolutions or promises such as giving up smoking, drinking or spending too much money in the shops. I wonder how many pledged to catch more fish, spend more time fishing or maybe even help the drive to save our seas? Whatever you chose, I hope one wish was to get out on the shore or boat as much as possible!

I have had a very good year. *SFM* is going from strength to strength and the future is looking fabulous for this adventure, and I am very proud to be a part of this. I would like to thank each and every one of you for supporting us and giving us the chance to bring something fresh and new to you.

MBE FOR SEAMAN

I would like to congratulate Sam Harris for being on this year's honours list. He was awarded the MBE for his services to sea angling. I have known Sam for many years and he has been helpful, polite and willing to get involved as much as he can with events and charities, as well as passing on valuable information freely and sharing his

knowledge of over 70 years of sea fishing. As far as I am aware, he might well be the first to be awarded such an accolade in this industry.

I am going up north to fish the mighty Amble Open this month, where I will be staying at his house and enjoying his usual excellent hospitality. There will be a huge number of top matchmen fishing the event and, quite honestly, I don't stand a chance of being in the prizes... unless I am very lucky. I am seeking advice from one of the top rods there, but it's hard to beat the locals on their own ground!

YAKKITY YAK

My fishing year has been pretty good too. I even went and bought a kayak, which I now keep at the coast. I thought I'd be out in it every time I visited my place on Anglesey, but after many trips, it has been a category of disaster! Without exception, every time I have been back the weather has been horrendous. Now, I have very good sea skills, but operating a kayak is new to me. I am very aware of the safety aspect and, for this reason, have decided going afloat on a 'yak in nasty conditions would be stupid. So, for those of you wondering why you've

FEATURES

- 22 FUR, FEATHER AND FOAM**
Mark Everard uses basic fly gear to have one last cast for estuary bass in Devon
- 26 LIVE IN LOWESTOFT**
Tony Gittins reveals the secrets of success to Barney Wright
- 48 BIRTHDAY BLUES**
Sandor Kovacs targets blue sharks on his birthday and receives the best present ever
- 54 DONEGAL DELIGHT**
Mike Thrussell steams out in search of the famous Cumberland wreck for some hectic sport
- 66 CHESIL CHALLENGE**
Gareth Davies and co head to the infamous Chesil Beach for a species hunt
- 70 WEARY FLOUNDER**
Simon Everett heads to an unlikely spot to target flounder
- 92 TAKE A BREAK**
Ben Harrison reveals the secrets of a Welsh hotspot

NEWS AND COMMENT

- 6 LOVE FISHING**
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder
- 12 CATCH REPORTS**
Bad weather hasn't stopped you from catching some incredible fish
- 20 LETTERS**
Readers share their views of life, fishing and everything else
- 44 SPECIES HUNT**
Our hunters are getting serious
- 64 ANGLING TRUST**
David Mitchell looks back at a disastrous month for bass
- 84 NIGEL FARAGE**
There's a light on the angling horizon
- 102 ON THE FIELD**
Nasty weather hasn't dampened our field casters' spirits
- 110 LET'S BE FRANK**
Frank Shaw is happy in his new port, but there's something missing...
- 113 SEA STORIES**
Laurel, Hardy, and Sam Harris MBE

not seen much of me paddling about, this is the reason. Perhaps I should bite the bullet, move the kayak back to the midlands, and invest in a decent roof rack for longer journeys – then I can go in sensible weather when the time suits. But I am too tight really, and will most likely wait for the summer months when I go to the island for a few days at a time.

SQUIDS IN

I have just got back from Falmouth after a super trip aboard *Carrick Lee* with Neil Bryant and good mate Gavin St Leger. Though the weather was harsh, we made it to a great mark where we bagged up with codling to 3lb, along with plenty of other species. Best of all was a squid I had on a mini pirk. I always love catching squid as the way their skin reacts to touch and light always amazes me (and they taste delicious).

Tight lines,

Barney Wright
Editor



SPECIES AND TACTICS

- 8** **WATCH OUT FOR THE PEELERS!**
John Popplewell takes a close look at the common shore crab
- 32** **PLUGGING IN**
Hard lures are the perfect tool for bass fishing, so we're taking a closer look
- 36** **HOW TO TARGET**
The plaice are making their way back in after spawning, so you'd better start heading out to catch them...
- 40** **MAKE YOUR MARK**
This month we explore the area around Fort Perch Rock, New Brighton...
- 46** **MONTHLY RIG**
Build and use the three-hook reversible flapper
- 52** **FISH FINDER**
Reading the sea is an age-old skill that still has its uses for fishermen today
- 80** **SCOUTING A NEW MARK – PART 1**
Fishing at a new mark can be intimidating, but here's a foolproof guide on how to make the most of it

- 85** **Q&A**
Got a problem? Our team of experts are here to help
- 106** **BIG COD TIME**
Glen Milligan explains the essential skills you'll need when you're searching for a PB cod



GEAR AND REVIEWS

- 18** **COMPETITION**
Your chance to win a Daiwa rod and luggage bundle
- 59** **ARE YOU FISHING COMFORTABLY?**
Clothing and footwear for the fashionable fisherman
- 76** **TOP GEAR**
We've trawled the tackle shops to find our favourite gear this month
- 97** **COMING CLEAN**
Steve Souter tidies up his fishing with the British-made Bungee Spongee
- 98** **TWO HULLS ARE BETTER THAN ONE**
We take a look at the pioneering Cheetah 6.2m Catamaran



TALENT SPOTTING

Photograph: Simon Everett

Words: Barney Wright

It cannot be denied that nature has created some of the most incredible sea creatures. It's true that some tropical species are stunning to behold and, at first sight, we see a brightly coloured beauty that seems to stand out from the rest. But let me tell you that, if you look close enough, you'll see things differently, even with something that appears quite hideous.

We can often be guilty of judging something at first glance. Take a scorpion fish, for example. You haul this up and with one look you immediately think 'Danger!' or 'Ugly...' But then you pause for a second and take a closer look. Scorpion fish are in fact incredible-looking creatures with intricate fin patterns and colour, and offer no danger whatsoever – even the multitude of spine are quite harmless if handled carefully. Have you ever looked into the eye of a shanny? They are quite stunning.

Another quite wonderful eye in the sea world is the spotted ray. Can you imagine how this creature views the world? Looking at this eye, you can't help but be amazed.

With remarkable colours and patterns, the ray has always been a striking looking fish, but then you notice the protruding eye – is it looking at us? What does it see? Any way you consider it, love rays or hate them, they can help us see things differently. ➤



WATCH OUT FOR PEELERS!

Continuing his series on baits, **John Popplewell** takes a close look at the common shore crab

The peeler crab is held in high esteem with match anglers and will always be a part of their armoury. To the specimen angler, it is the bait that will often find the bigger fish; to the pleasure angler it's still approached with a little trepidation, thought of as a bait that might be difficult to obtain or use. But let's keep it simple, and start with the life cycle of the shore crab...

THE LIFE AND TIMES

Common shore crabs can be found all round the British Isles. The female crab can carry up to 200,000 eggs and these

offspring will hatch from her, and are carried in the carapace (a pouch of shell) under her.

The common crab has a hard outer shell and each year it will shed this hard exterior. It's always growing inside its hard body, and the only way it can grow freely is to cast its old shell off, revealing a soft skin underneath. While it is going through this transition, the crab is known as a peeler crab.

The shedding crab will go through different stages as its new shell hardens: peeler, soft-back and paper-back. The male crabs will peel first, and this will happen as the weather starts to warm,

Peeler crab is a versatile bait, and has many applications





THE MATCHMAN'S PEELER BAIT

01



You will need: scissors or a bait knife, bait elastic and (of course) your peeler crab.

02



Remove the claws and legs, and set aside before peeling the crab body.

03



Cut the crab in half, then remove the brown feathery gills.

04



Each half-body can be used as a bait, and the legs and claws will tip worm baits.



TOP TIP

It's a good idea to thread or place the top end of your crab over the eye of the hook and bind neatly with elastic cotton. This will prevent the bait from sliding down the hook.

in early April right through to the end of May. The females will peel from mid-May onwards, and when the female crabs are in the peeling stage they are ready for mating. The male crabs have now got their new hard shells and are looking to mate with their female counterparts!

COLLECTION

There are different ways to collect peelers, firstly let's look at the most commonly used ways...

ROCKS

This is probably the biggest talking point among crab-using anglers. Any rocks turned over must be replaced as they were found, otherwise trapped weed will rot, and any sea life will not return to this safe haven. I cannot count the times I have heard of anglers gathering crabs, turning rocks over and not replacing them.

To be honest, sometimes it is difficult to put a rock back *exactly* as it was, but as long as no weed is trapped, the crabs and other sea life will return.

BREAKWATERS

Peeler crabs will take cover in the weed hanging from breakwaters, and will also bury themselves around the edges of any formed rock pools. The only way to find them is to get in with your hands and forage. It's not for the faint-hearted, and you will get the odd nip and scratch, but the benefits definitely outweigh the pain.

SALT PANS

These are rock pools with crevices around the edges where peelers love to take

refuge. Once again, you need to get your hands in around the edges and feel for the crabs. This is a very productive way of finding bait.

TRAPS

This is a controversial issue as any man-made ensnarement that is placed on the beach is considered illegal.

Still, it's always worth moving flat rocks so they lean on others, making an irresistible haven for peelers that you can reap the rewards from.

NIGHT LAMPING

This is by far my favourite way of finding peelers. Male crabs will come out at night, carrying the female peelers. They can be found foraging under the cloak of darkness, but please be careful as night-time searching can bring its own dangers.

NETS

Small commercial boats will always pick up peelers in their nets, so it's always worth asking if they can supply you with some peelers.

Another alternative is a small seine net dragged through a creek, which will find peelers and soft-backs.

KEEPING YOUR BAITS

Keeping peelers is not a problem, as long as you're ready and prepared.

After returning from your search you will have a bucket full of peelers, soft-backs and paper-backs. The peeler crabs need to go into your bait fridge straight away. Soft-backs can be frozen or used within a couple of days, and the paper

backs (crabs that have just gone past the soft stage) will need to be used at the earliest possible convenience.

SHOP BOUGHT PEELERS

For those anglers that haven't got the time to find their own peelers, then the tackle shop is the next best option. Nowadays crabs can be ordered even in the winter, with supplies from Devon coming into their own.

I often hear anglers say that peelers are an expensive bait, but actually if you work it out they are a very economical bait. Ten crabs will cost approximately £10, and from that package you will probably get 25 baits, which equates to at least three hours of fishing.

PREPARING YOUR PEELERS FOR THE HOOK

There are various ways to prepare your bait, depending on your fishing style...

THE MATCHMAN

The competition angler will first remove all the claws and legs and place them to one side, then crack the top shell and under-carapace, before peeling off all of the shell. He will then cut the crab in half and remove the gills. These are the brown feathery lungs found either side of the body and are no good to man or beast. He now has two baits from one crab, and the legs and claws can be used for tipping off worm baits on other hooks.

THE SPECIMEN HUNTER

The specimen hunter will probably use a whole crab, but prepared in a slightly different way. The legs will be removed and the main body of the crab will be almost cut in half (front to back) but not quite all the way. He will then open the body of the crab to make a long, enticing, scent-trailing bait. The hunter will then bind the bait onto his hook with a good amount of elastic cotton.

THE PLEASURE ANGLER

Crab will probably be a bait that the pleasure angler will pick up from the tackle shop along with his worm baits, but with a bit of thought it can turn a good session into an exceptional day.

Peeler can be used as the hook tip off bait, and rag or lugworm as the main bait! Or the crab, just as a bait on its own. I always use the wider gap hooks, this will



Bass love crab baits, particularly at the paper-back stage of shedding

stop the crab from masking the barb of the hook.

FREEZING CRABS

There are many ways of freezing crabs, I find the best way is to wrap each crab separately in cling film and then put them in packs of 10 in the freezer.

Peeler crabs do have a shelf life, and I find that four months is just about as long as their scent appeal lasts. ➤

TIPS FOR KEEPING CRAB BAITS:

- Crabs are very easily kept in the bait fridge
- Keep your crabs in trays in different stages of peeling
- They can either be kept in damp newspaper or seaweed, both will keep your crabs in pristine condition until your next fishing trip
- If you're keeping peelers for more than a few days they will need a drink, place them in seawater of the same temperature for 20 minutes or so. This is also a great way for bringing on those extra hard peelers that you might want to use at the end of the week.
- Crabs that are turning and you're not going to be able to use in time can be frozen for use in the winter.

CATCH REPORTS

Here are your top catches from the past month...



WIN TOP FLADEN GEAR!

Send in your catch report to be in with a chance of winning some of the best tackle in the business! This month's prizes are being given away by tackle legend Fladen.

To enter your catch, email the details of your fish and how you caught it to barneyw@blazepublishing.co.uk or send us a message on Facebook.

This month's Star Catch will receive a **Matt Hayes Adventure Salt Reel** worth £29.99 and a **Matt Hayes Adventure Ultimate Saltwater Kit** worth £19.99.

The reel is ideal for saltwater fishing and can be used for spinning, ledger or float fishing to target cod, bass, mackerel, flatfish and more. It features a long cast spool design, front drag technology, four ultra-smooth ball bearings and is ergonomically styled.

The Saltwater Kit contains rigs and terminal tackle to catch multi-species from a boat, pier, beach and rocks. The set includes Aberdeen hooks, float stoppers, rigs, lure, tubby float, beads, assorted swivels, weights and a plastic sea disgorger.

All runners-up will receive an Ultimate Saltwater Kit.



★ ★ ★ STAR CATCH ★ ★ ★

Dean Rogers from Kessingland caught this 20lb cod from the shore at Aldeburgh. It was caught on an Anyfish Anywhere Tournament Match rod and Abu 6500 CTC

reel, with 18lb Asso Ultra line and Pennel pulley rig. The big lug bait was originally snaffled by a small whiting, which was then taken by the cod.





Seven-year-old Alannah Inglis went cod fishing for the first time on Whitby Pier and had great results. On her first cast she brought in a double shot of whiting; on the second, a 3lb cod and a huge whiting. Dad Neil also caught a 5lb cod, which was grabbed twice by a seal on the way in! After a couple more catches, Neil and Alannah called it a night with Alannah's 3lb 4oz cod the best catch.

NEWS BITES

SAM HARRIS MBE

Sam Harris has been awarded the MBE for his services to recreational sea angling in the New Year Honours.

"I am really delighted and feel that this award also belongs to all the sea anglers and the committees I have worked with, for all of their support for the events we have held to raise monies for various charities," Sam told us. "Thank you also to all of the local tackle shops and tackle manufacturers for their support and help too."

Sam truly deserves this award and we at *SFM* are delighted that such a hard working man, our colleague and friend, has been bestowed such an honour. It's also fabulous that someone in sea fishing has been recognised and attention drawn to our sport.

"SLAVERY" SCANDAL

An African fisherman has allegedly been forced to work for less than £10 per week on a Scottish scallop dredger. The *Sunday Times* published allegations on 4 January that the Ghanaian man was trafficked into the UK with a promise of a £600 per week salary, but was mistreated, severely underpaid and made to work 23 hours a day. This is the latest in a string of accusations of trafficking "slave" fishermen into Scotland.

RNLI RESCUE

Wick and Fraserburgh RNLI spent most of New Year's Day helping the crew of a stricken fishing vessel 35 miles offshore.

The vessel had been dead in the water for approximately 12 hours, and had lost all power.

Supply vessel *Vos Master* also responded to the call and stood by until the lifeboats and RAF rescue helicopter 137 arrived. All those onboard the vessel were safe and uninjured.



An undulate ray of 16lb 9oz was the catch of the day for Jack Hunter on board charter boat *Kelley's Hero 2* out of Langstone. The ray was caught while cod fishing and fell to a double squid bait presented on a running ledger and a Pennel rig of 8/0 hooks.

NEWS BITES

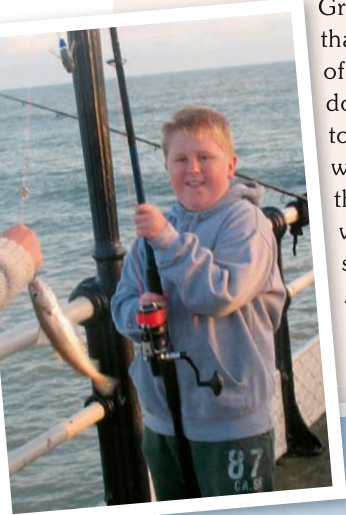
COME TOGETHER

In October 2014, West Sussex & Surrey Angling Academy's Graham Cridland had £600 worth of teaching equipment stolen from his car. He put the incident on Facebook in the hope that the equipment would be found and the thief caught.

What Graham didn't anticipate was the reaction of the fishing fraternity. Within a few weeks the World Sea Fishing Forum had arranged a sea fishing shore match, which took place on 9 November.

The winners of the match put their prizes into the raffle pot, with the total raffle ticket sales raising over £530 for the Academy. The raffle winners then gave their prizes to the students of the Academy. Midland Fishing Supplies and Sensus/Starbaits also donated a large amount of match terminal tackle.

Graham estimates that the total value of equipment donated comes to £1,300, and would like to thank everyone who has supported the Academy during this difficult time.

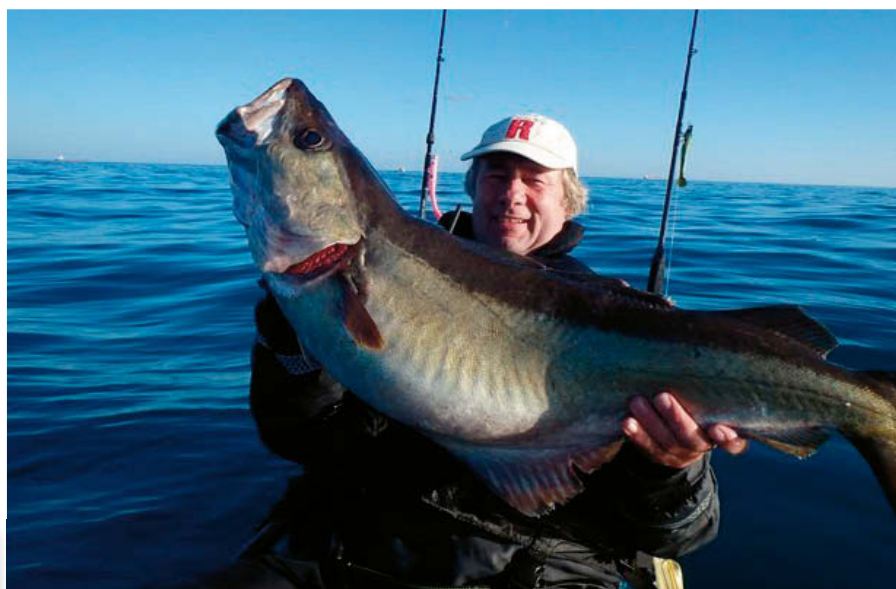


Dave Poulter was at anchor about two miles south of the Nab tower when he caught this 18lb undulate ray. It is the largest undulate ever landed aboard the charter boat *Oberon*, skippered by Ray McLaren.



Three Tuns Angling Club went out on Gary Flint's *Discovery* in the Mersey for a cod fishing trip.

Graham Fletcher hooked in and landed a 7lb 8oz cod, and soon afterwards Richard Pope hooked into a fish too, which when landed weighed in at 19lb – a personal best for Richard and the biggest fish that has come out of the Mersey for many years.



Ian Poole from Kernow caught this magnificent 21lb 4oz pollack from his kayak on light spinning gear. Ian caught the fish within a mile of the rocky shoreline whilst out fishing with friends, and he had a couple of 5lb fish before he hooked into the pollack of his dreams.

Ian says: "My rod locked up, the reel giving line fast, and I was trying hard to get the balance of drag between the fish not getting to cover and my 20lb braid not breaking. It felt like it was right on the limit, and after about three or four minutes I had the fish up around mid water, where I could ease some of the drag off without so much worry about the fish reaching the snags. The dives just kept coming, one after the other, and I just wanted to get a glimpse of this fish as I knew for sure it was something special. Soon I saw a big cream shape rising up through the clear water. Could this be the 20lb-er I had been waiting for?"

As soon as the fish surfaced I drew it towards the kayak, the fish politely opened its mouth, lip gripper on bottom jaw, then I pulled aboard the yak, and quickly dispatched it. The fish weighed in at 21lb 4oz – the fish of a lifetime."

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NEWS BITES

AVE TRAVEL

Fishing adventure holiday company Ave Travel are now taking bookings for the spring/summer season 2015. Owners Kris and Siggie provide a bespoke and personal service, showing you the best fishing, shooting and tours that Iceland has to offer. Visit www.ave-travel.is or email info@ave-travel.is for more information.

PELAGIC DISCARD BAN TAKES EFFECT

A discard ban for pelagic species has now been implemented. This means that fishermen targeting these species (including herring, mackerel and blue whiting) will have to land all the fish they catch. The regulation will also include by-catch of quota species, like cod, and any quota fish that are below the minimum landing size (MLS).

UK fisheries minister George Eustice said: "The long fight to reform the broken Common Fisheries Policy has been won and today marks a significant milestone in our commitment to fish more sustainably by ending the shameful practice of discarding perfectly good fish."

Next year, a discard ban for demersal species, such as cod and hake, will also be implemented.

The European Commission is also committed to undertaking research into quota flexibility regarding regional variations in fish stocks.

CLAPA MATCH SUCCESS

Sea Angling Community Charity Match organisers have hailed their latest event a success after raising a total of £1522.50 in aid of CLAPA, the Cleft Lip and Palate Association.

The event took place at Amroth, Pembrokeshire on 6 December and attracted good support, with 68 competitors and many bystanders attending.

Mike Mather took the senior section prize with a 58cm lesser spotted dogfish.



Stuart Metcalfe fought hard to bring in this beautiful 21lb cod on a mark south of the Needles. Stuart was on board Alan Brand's charter boat *Hermit* out of Lymington, and caught the cod on a three whole squid bait, loaded onto a Pennel rig of 5/0 and 2/0 Manta Extra hooks.



Liverpool's Andy Tsang is usually found coarse fishing, but after trying his hand at sea fishing he has been rewarded with these two stunning shore-caught cod. After many sessions with little success, perseverance paid off and Andy was thrilled to catch these fish from the Mersey Marina wharf, weighing in at 4lb 2oz and 3lb respectively. They were landed three hours before high tide on a two-hook flapper with fresh lugworm tipped with squid.

Alan Townsend from Didamarton caught this excellent 9lb 4oz brill on the *Katie Ann* out of Weymouth. It was netted by skipper Paul Davies and spat out the hook as it touched the deck. Alan used a Pennel rig with 6/0 hooks and a strip of mackerel.



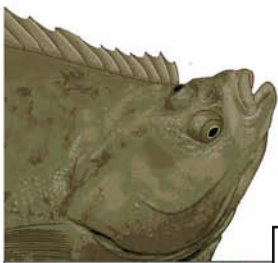
Chris O'Sullivan caught a brilliant 7.5lb bass from Fermoye Strand in Brandon Bay, County Kerry. It took frozen sandeel fished at about 70 metres, an hour before high water.



Paul's Tackle regular Hector Holkam caught these two fine fish off Hastings whilst aboard Geoff Sherlock's *My Sharon*. The thornback ray weighed in at 3lb 8oz and the plaice at 1lb 8oz.

FISHING WITH EMMA

Flounder (*Platichthys flesus*)

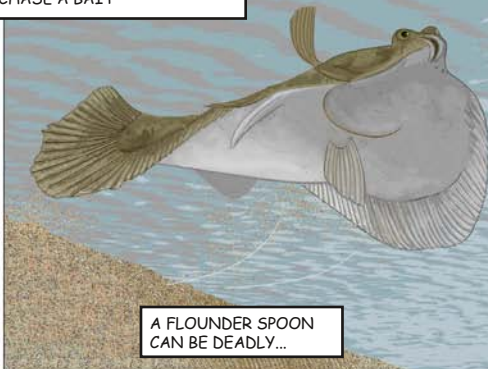


Flounder are common flatfish found on sand and muddy ground around the country, often coming very close to the shore. They can tolerate very low salinity levels so are usually present in large numbers in estuaries and frequently stray upriver into coarse fishing territory. Two- or three-hook flapping rigs baited with ragworm (harbour rag, if you can get it) or lugworm is favoured but mussels or strips of fish will also produce results. Remember though that the fish will often be close, sometimes in just inches of water. Flounder are feisty little flatfish and can be terrific fun on light gear. At this time of year they offer great sport to lure and LRF anglers.

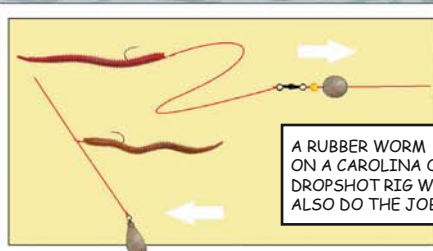
UK minimum size: 27cm (11in) UK shore record: 5lb 7oz UK boat record: 5lb 11oz

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We have two of the popular Daiwa Theory Beachcasters to give away to our lucky readers. In addition to the rods, Daiwa have also generously added in a set of Sand Storm sea luggage for each winner. That's a total bundle worth over £250 for each winner!

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Model: Theory Beachcaster
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The closing date for entries is 28 February 2015. It's simple, so what are you waiting for? You can enter online at www.seafishingmagazine.com, via our Facebook page, or fill out the entry form below to be in with your chance of winning a Daiwa bundle.

ENTRY FORM:

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Rules of Entry:

Email your answer to competition@blazepublishing.co.uk quoting 'Sea Fishing February competition' in the subject bar, or post to: Sea Fishing February competition, Blaze Publishing Ltd, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SZ. Closing date: 28 February 2015. You must give your full name, phone number and address for the entry to be valid. The first names pulled from the editor's hat will win the prize. One entry per household. No alternatives will be offered. Blaze Publishing would like to keep you informed of other offers and publications. Please tick here if you would NOT like to be contacted by post or email ☐

YOUR LETTERS

If you've got something you'd like to share with us and the angling community, then please get in touch. Find us on Facebook or email the editor at barneyw@blazepublishing.co.uk. You can also write to us at *Sea Fishing Magazine*, Blaze Publishing, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 5SZ.

The editor reserves the right to amend items for reasons of space, brevity, legality and sense.



LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS A FREE ULTIMA POWERFLEX SPOOL WORTH £12.95

In the January issue of *Sea Fishing*, Nigel Farage comments about a licence for sea fishing. I might agree with it in principle, and I also believe it will come one day. One of the biggest problems with a licence for sea fishing as with coarse fishing would be the policing of it. In 40 years of coarse fishing I have only had my licence checked once, so how would it work and what would we get for our money? I only see it as another stealth tax.

Last winter I saw four trawlers fishing The Shambles bank, The bank is not big enough to sustain such pressure; the turbot and brill fishing



on The Shambles was very poor in 2014. If the licence money would for example do something to stop such plunder and also help to police the MCZs then I for one would be in favour.

Andy Collings, via email

Ed: Hi Andy, I cannot see how a licence can be applied to sea fishing for the same reasons as you. Policing would be impossible and I am a firm believer that all should have free access to the seas. The costs of policing would massively out-weight the revenue brought in, and I feel it would also deter many anglers from fishing again.

THE TACKLE SHOP VS THE INTERNET: WHICH IS BEST FOR GEAR AND HELP?

Paul Stillman

I enjoy sharing tips online and learning from people I would otherwise never meet. However, you can't put a rod together and try casting online.

Alex Frearson

If tackle shops didn't cost twice as much as the internet then more people would use them.

Jon Bray

I owe all my success and knowledge to my local shop. The owner has forgotten more than most know – surely that's worth 20 per cent extra!

Danny Panter

My local tackle store is very expensive. Ordering off websites is more convenient and cheaper the majority of the time.

Thomas McMinn

The world is moving forward and if the angling community doesn't move with it we'll all be left in the Stone Age.

Carl Prewett

When I started fishing, the internet was a great help. The trouble is sifting through the tosh to find what you want.

Daniel Crump

I used to sit on a freezer in my local tackle shop as a nipper and listen to everything that went on. I learnt most of my fishing from that experience.

Neill Walker

Ever tried telling an online shop what's wrong with an item? You can walk into your tackle shop and talk to them face to face.



How refreshing it is to read a magazine with so many informative articles. I have found some very inspiring.

After seeing the front cover of the January issue I couldn't wait to read the linked article, being from South Wales and not

having yet caught a large blonde ray. To my dismay it appeared to be very cloak and dagger in regards to the locations that were fished.

This is disappointing not only for myself (who has the convenience of possibly fishing these marks regularly), but also

those who may wish to travel from further afield – which the writer of the article encourages. I have seen "I caught a fish at my secret mark" far too many times and think it's time for more clarity.

Mr R Thomas, via email

Ed: Though we reveal where the angler is fishing nine times out of ten, this has always been an issue. Many of the anglers have worked hard to find these marks and are often not willing to reveal them to everyone. I suggest you contact the guys involved via Facebook and ask them about their marks directly. Alan Brown is only too willing to help, and this method was indeed how he came to fish the area, so get in touch!

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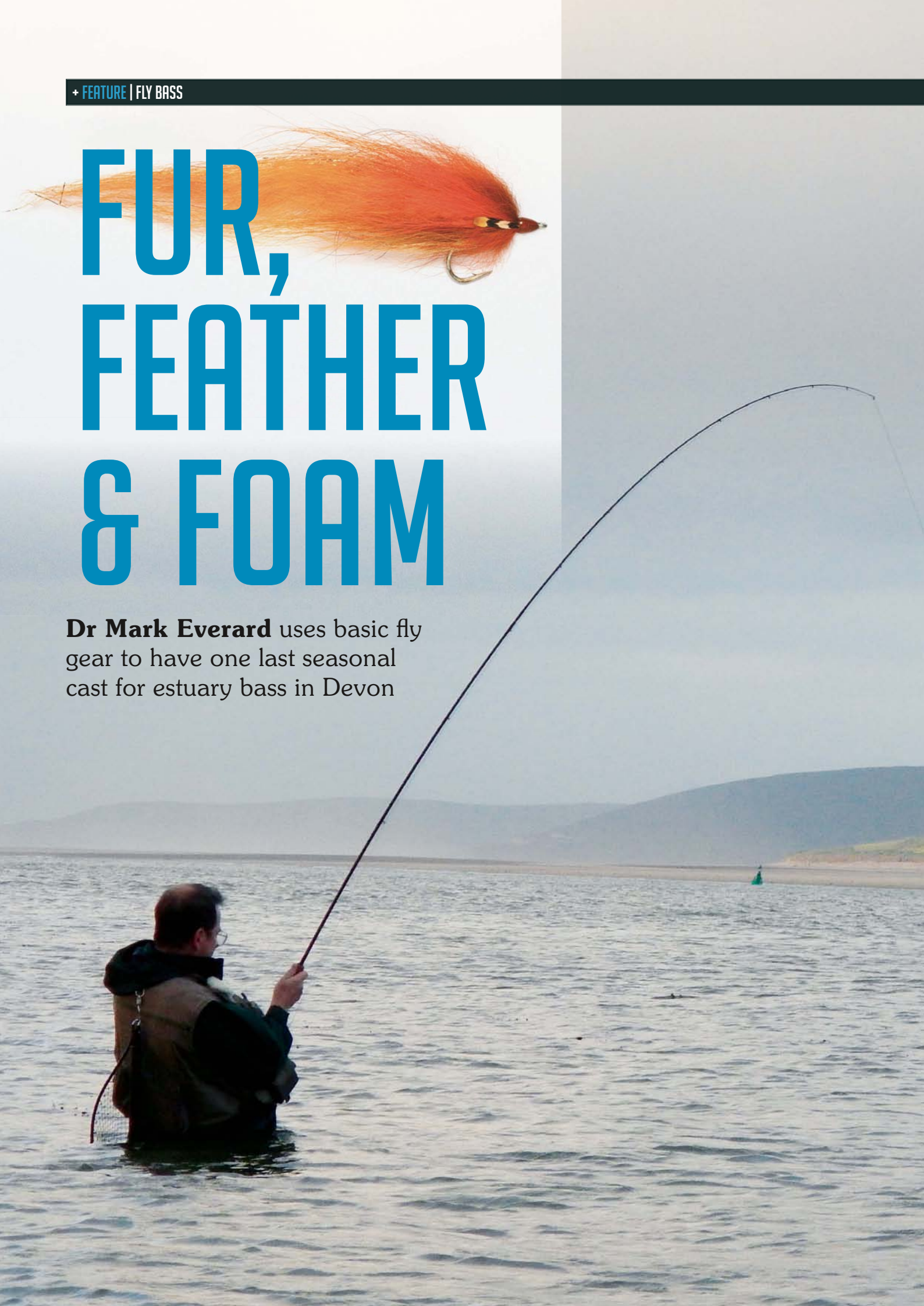


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FUR, FEATHER & FOAM

Dr Mark Everard uses basic fly gear to have one last seasonal cast for estuary bass in Devon



ANGLER PROFILE

Name: Dr Mark Everard

Age: 56 and aging disgracefully

Hometown: Great Somerford, Wiltshire

Occupation: Associate Professor of Ecosystem Services, UWE Bristol, author and broadcaster

Favourite type of fishing: River coarse fishing, and fly fishing for bass

Favourite fish: Roach – I love them and have written two books on them!



The last bass of the season for Mark was small but perfectly formed

Work, once again, had taken its toll on us. With heads down and too preoccupied to notice the procession of summer, suddenly we awoke to noticeably shorter days, the absence of swallows, and cool mists at dawn. The high season was stealing away without me taking a fly rod to the coast in search of bass. I could not let winter roll in without at least one last-gasp session.

And so I found myself on the long haul from Wiltshire – a county blessed with many virtues that sadly do not include a coastline – to a favourite Devon estuary. My intention was to meet up with my friend Jonathan to fling some fluff around in the hope of intercepting bass following the rising tide up the river mouth.

TOOLS FOR THE JOB IN HAND

I travel light these days, particularly when fly fishing. I have several Shakespeare travel fly rods in different lengths and weights – older Expeditions and the newer, crisper Agilities – that pack down into compact and tough tubes that can be easily stowed into a corner of the car.

Despite the industry forever presenting us with expensive ‘must-have’ kit, the affordable end of the market is, with some exceptions, pretty good quality. The entry level equipment provided by the better-known tackle companies is certainly a lot better than much of the top-end equipment one could buy twenty years ago, so I use it with confidence. What my

travel rods lack in bling and snobbery, they make up for in functionality. My fly reels too are mainly plastic cheapies, all the better to resist salt corrosion and easy to rinse in cold water after the event. The main point of a fly reel most of the time is simply to store line, so I’ve never been seduced to spend more than is necessary on them despite the shiny seductiveness of what gazes up at me from the tackle brochures.

Over the years, my compact, bargain-basement fly kit has served me well for bass and pollack, as well as dace, trout, grayling, pike, sea trout and even salmon, all of which I have found to be largely unimpressed by brand or cost.

RENDEZVOUS BY THE DUNES

I duly arrived at the allotted time and place by the dunes. There then followed the usual mobile phone exchanges to rectify the fact that we’d each... er... interpreted our agreed destination differently. About 10 miles differently, in fact. It happens every time, but soon, Jonathan and I were kitting up together in the brisk southwesterly breeze.

To combat the force of the wind, I broke out the 9-weight rod and line rather than the more delicate 5-weight kit, which is always a lot of fun to use – particularly when a chunkier bass slams into your fly and powers off up the estuary. The leader was a robust eight feet or so of 12lb Maxima line, offering great abrasion resistance on rock and sand.

FLIES FOR BASS

When selecting flies for bassing, choose those that resemble small fish and other things the bass might eat naturally. A good example is the Clouser Minnow, which looks like a small sandeel. Its head is weighted and it fishes with the hook pointing upwards.

There's also the Deceiver Minnow, which is tied conventionally (with the hook pointing down) and offers more bulk to suggest a small round fish such as mackerel, sand smelt, sprat, wrasse or pollack.

Other alternatives are shrimp and crab imitations. Many people will make the mistake of using small flies, but for bass, bigger flies are much more effective.

I carry a variety of big flies, ranging from monsters tied to 2/0 hooks that I use mainly for pike, right down to flashy fry imitation on size 8s. Finesse is not the driving consideration; flashiness and a vague resemblance to sandeels, smaller fry and shrimps are much more important.

Donning chest waters and hoisting a light fly kit over my shoulder, we were soon travelling light over the dunes to meet the tide as it turned from slack low water.

SAFETY FIRST!

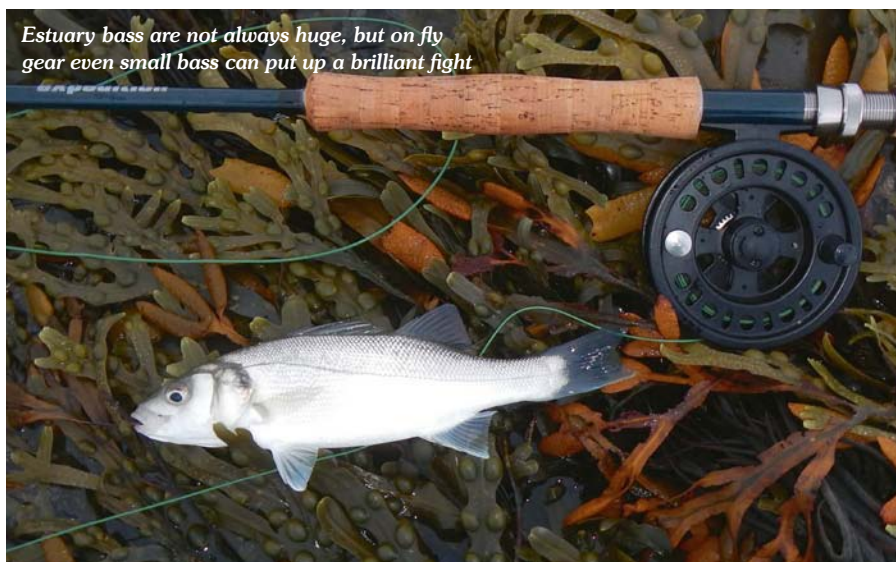
The most important consideration is, as ever, safety. Walking out onto an estuary at low water, one can gain a false impression of its flatness. Too many people have headed for the far strand, eyes fixed over the water and unaware of channels of rushing water filling up between them and *terra firma*. At best, this leads to embarrassment, soggy and drowned mobile phones. At worst... well, you can imagine.

It's important to be aware of the terrain and of the water rising around you, and particularly the risk of becoming stranded on a shallow spit that may become isolated as deeper channels form behind. Always, always keep a dry line of retreat to higher ground behind you.

THE FIRST WAVE

Conditions on the day were, like the curate's egg, good and bad in parts. The good parts included the overcast sky, warm breeze and the scarcity of drifting weed that can otherwise make a session frustrating. The

Estuary bass are not always huge, but on fly gear even small bass can put up a brilliant fight



bad parts were the lateness of the year and the murkiness of the water after a recent blow and deluge. But we play with the hand we are dealt; the alternative was to see the year out without casting a fly for bass.

They arrived as the current stilled and reversed from downstream to up, lagging behind the change of tide and the rise of water level.

First, I felt a nip and saw a boil near the retrieved fly. Then, I made a solid connection with a schoolie that fought with a strength and speed. What it lacked in stature, it made up for in vigour and beauty. I lay the perfect bass on the dark wrack for a photograph before slipping it back into the rising water, watching it career off to join its kin in the onrushing tide. Perhaps it is my coarse angling roots showing through, allied with an enduring fondness for smaller species of fish, but size has meant less and less to me with advancing years, with many specimen angling targets of my younger years met and often exceeded.

CATCH AND RELEASE

Bass sport on the rising tide can be fast and furious – I once landed 32 bass in well under two hours – just as it can be frustratingly absent on others. Today was neither, and we were blessed with a few bass between us. Nothing approached the 42cm size that would assure us that, were one taken for the pot, it would have spawned at least once. But, for all that, it was a lovely way to spend an afternoon in a wilder place, with a wild fish, and to share it with a good mate.

DEVON GOLD

Two hours after the turn of the tide, the smooth upstream flow was now broken by more powerful waves surging up the widening splay of the river mouth. Some of my mates persist well beyond this stage of tide, with bigger flies or reverting to plugs or spoons as larger, scarcer bass are more possible. But today, as the light dimmed, we had had our fun with the first, admittedly rather sparse wave of



school bass, which by now would have moved up the estuary in pursuit of small fish, worms, shrimps and crabs.

The gathering dusk too made up our minds to exchange sea foam for a foaming pint of golden Devon ale; a perfect end to an admittedly not quite perfect day's sport, for which our efforts had been rewarded with a few sprightly young bass. And perfect fish they all were too, despite their lack of stature, all of them slipped back into the rising water to grow on, continue their species in these times when bass stocks are under such serious threat, and hopefully to find us again to fight another day.

GIVE IT A GO

If you've never cast a fly for estuary or inshore bass, you have missed a treat. The bass are often really close in, actively hunting down sandeels and similar prey close to the water's edge. All bass, regardless of size, fight like demons, particularly on light fly tackle.

All in all, fly casting for bass is huge fun, cheap and accessible without major preparation of bait or rigs. Big fish too are happy, from time to time, to join in the fun in the shallowest of water... just not every day. ➤



Fine and delicate flies won't cut it for estuary bass – flashy and colourful ones are more effective



The killing fly on the day – a monstrosity with metal eyes



If you have a lot of short takes that don't result in hook-ups, take a pair of scissors to feathers and fibres that extend far beyond the bend of the hook. This will help stop bass nipping the 'tail' of their intended meal without biting into metal.

Jonathan braved the cold waters of the estuary to find the fish



L I V E A T LOWESTOFT

Barney Wright joins The Rocket Reel Company managing director Tony Gittins to learn a thing or two about cod fishing on the east coast

I have known Tony Gittins for many years and have fished with him on several occasions. Usually he would join me and a couple of others and simply set up and fish away some 50m down the beach and only a few words were said. Tony is quite reserved and rarely talks about his achievements, but this time I really got to know the man, what a treat that was! You think you know someone quite well, but truth is you don't – not until you sit down with them and spend time talking and listening.

BY 'ECK!

Despite absolutely no accent whatsoever, Tony hailed from Drifffield, East Yorkshire, where he lived near to the chalk streams. He started fishing at nine years old, and his first catch was a 2lb roach. Most respectable. But he found this boring after a while, as all it involved was wandering along the banks, peering through the clear water, spotting fish then hauling them out – not much of a challenge.

He looked for a more exciting fishing adventure and soon realised that the

mystery of not knowing what's out there and what you might catch in the sea world might just be what he was looking for. Tony spent his early years using his school bus pass to seek out venues around Bridlington and get into the wonderful world of sea fishing.

Tony learned to dig his own bait, picked up a good sense of watercraft and, before long, he became very proficient at fishing. He began match angling in 1973, which coincided with the start of the 'casting revolution', performing well



Big and juicy black lugworm are the top bait

MANY FIRSTS

Tony was the man who invented the pulley wishbone rig. He was also the first to don the hooded fleece onesie for fishing, which was later to be adopted by Helly Hansen.

Oh, and he introduced salopettes to sea fishing, after being inspired by ski clothing.

and making a name for himself. Back then the match fishing would go a little quiet during the summer, and Tony would enter two or three casting competitions, again performing well. His hard work and natural talent paid off, and Tony landed the role of secretary of the United Kingdom Surfcasting Federation in 1980. Since then, he has launched and developed his own business, The Rocket Reel Company, making the only reel fully constructed in the UK. This includes every single component of the reel, which is completely hand-built by him as well.

THE PLAN

Tony suggested that we fish from high water down, during a tide that coincided with falling darkness. He picked a reasonably sized tide where high water was at about midday. As it got dark around 4pm, this would be perfect. There was also





The intended quarry finally makes a show – a nice brace of codling, one at around 2lb and the other 1.5lb

a second phase to my cunning plan, where I would stop over and fish the next day if conditions suited. And since Tony owns and runs a superb B&B on the Lowestoft sea front called *The Sandcastle*, it would be downright rude not to book a room.

Luckily there was room at the inn, so I was made up. Incidentally, it's worth noting that the B&B is quite lovely and Tony welcomes sea anglers – so do pay a visit and learn from the maestro next time you're in the area.

SMOOTH TALKER

It was just a short drive south to the mark, which was around 300m or so north of the mighty CEFAS building, which also offered free parking at the roadside. Tony had earmarked a spot a couple of groynes down, which was clear of snags. His usual spot had been contaminated with some form of rig-snatching devil out at sea – probably a huge heft of lines and weights. This is not uncommon along this coast. Tony loathes losing rigs and tries to avoid, at all costs, fishing over snaggy areas. I, contrary devil that I am, prefer broken ground, as I feel more fish will be resident in search of trapped food. Tony insisted that,

despite the lack of structure, this was still a great area and had produced many codling recently, with absolutely no lost rigs.

LOW WATER

Tony explained that the cod fishing would pick up near low tide, when a sand bar would become exposed. We could then walk onto this bar and cast to a gully generally out of range. As we had time to chat, Tony got talking about his history and revealed some really interesting stuff, so for a while, the fishing played second fiddle!

Tony is (and has been for some time) a major player in the sea fishing world, so it was fascinating to hear first-hand how things that we now take for granted actually came about.

According to Mr Gittins, the big revolution in beach fishing was the Breakaway lead, designed by casting guru and part of the Breakaway team, Nigel Forrest. The original fishing leads were all fixed wire; they were horrible to use, especially when fishing at range, as dragging one of these monstrosities back over a distance was akin to hauling an anchor. The revolutionary leads were fitted with grip wires that were designed to release on retrieve or breaking-out, and therefore were no trouble to reel in. Though long-range casting was in its early days, and most anglers were only chucking three hooks 50 to 70 yards, the

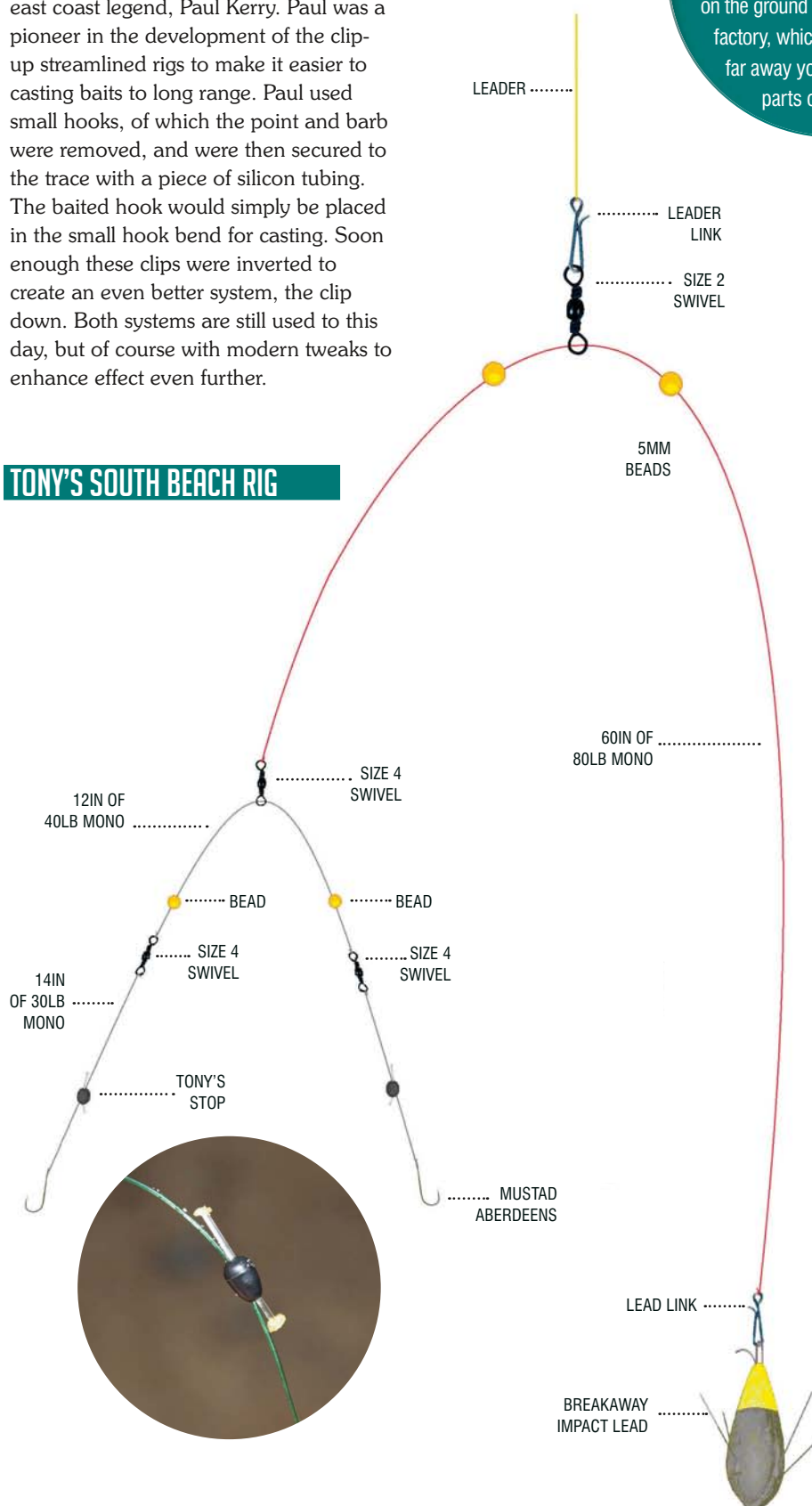


Tony was vigilant about clearing up beach mess, which he kindly offloaded into my fish bucket!

fixed wires leads weren't really an issue – until long range became more popular. These leads are now an essential part of almost every modern sea angler's kit.

The next big impact for sea fishing came in the late 1970s from another east coast legend, Paul Kerry. Paul was a pioneer in the development of the clip-up streamlined rigs to make it easier to casting baits to long range. Paul used small hooks, of which the point and barb were removed, and were then secured to the trace with a piece of silicon tubing. The baited hook would simply be placed in the small hook bend for casting. Soon enough these clips were inverted to create an even better system, the clip down. Both systems are still used to this day, but of course with modern tweaks to enhance effect even further.

TONY'S SOUTH BEACH RIG



INTERESTINGLY

Lowestoft is the most easterly town in the UK. A giant disc marks the most easterly part of the town itself on the ground behind the Birdseye factory, which shows you how far away you are from other parts of the world.



There's something better on as the tide reaches low water

TONY'S RIG

Tony's claim to fame was the wishbone rig, which he invented many years ago as an alternative to the Pennel rig. The wishbone casts a long way and offers two baits instead of the single one that a Pennel does. Though three hooks was the norm for most matchmen, if extra distance was needed the long-range rigs were deployed – as they are today. Tony uses this rig for pretty much all of his long-range cod fishing along this coastline, and it has accounted for many big cod over the years up to 16.5lb, as well as myriad other fish and species.

His rig proved very effective this trip too, and though it's more complicated than a version I might build myself, it certainly works wonders. Looking through the construction of Tony's rigs, it was like peering into the past. He hasn't changed anything in its build, all old components and even gold-plated Mustad Aberdeen hooks, of which he still has hundreds. Apparently he bought a consignment years ago and still hasn't run out! Tony pops an extra bend in his hooks to offset them, which helps to get a good hook-up every time.

THE SMALL STUFF

Tony was full of great stories, but we still were primarily there for the fishing – which, incidentally, was going rather well.

We had some great quality fresh black lug that we bought from Angling Mad in Pakefield – big, juicy and firm. We baited up with whole worms to try to fend off the smaller stuff, but it didn't work. We were both bagging up with a load of whiting and dab, but it wasn't the piles of cod we were hoping for.

In fact, it wasn't until nearly low water, when Tony could venture out onto the newly exposed sandbar, that he caught the first of many codling. He was spot on, and his first cast there resulted in a series of rattles and taps on the rod tip, then the wonderful drop back bite we all know and love to see. A double shot was the result: one of over 2lb and one just a pound or so. This is what we had come for. We knew the chances of big fish were remote at that time, as there were heaps of codling from the year classes 2011–2012 and 2012–2013, with fish 2lb to 2.5lb and 1lb to 1.5lb respectively.

TIME'S UP

The end result was a mixed bag of small codling, whiting and dab – a typical catch



Tony used his wealth of knowledge to find the codling

for this coast. It was huge fun and a great lesson for me in how a few milestone tackle developments have completely changed the face of sea angling over the past 50 years.

I, however, fancied another crack at it the next day over high water. Tony couldn't make this trip, but I ventured back to the same spot and blasted out those prime black lug. I had codling, whiting and also a poor cod – a species I don't think I've had from this area from the shore before.

It was another good trip and I hope the fish hang around for as long as possible, and will hopefully be a few pounds bigger next year. ➤

HOW IT BEGAN

The Rocket Reel Company was born of the search to find a bearing lubricant to enhance long range casting on the beach and field. The breakthrough came with a chance conversation, whereby Tony Gittins discovered a type of lubricant never used in this application before. Exhaustive testing and subsequent trials with the best casters in the country, convinced him that he had found what many had been looking for. It was lubricant that, in effect, controlled the entire behaviour of the bearings (and reel) when casting long distances, a lubricant with perfect viscosity, that wouldn't evaporate, emulsify, congeal, wash off or throw off. Non-corrosive and non-caustic, it prevented any damage to the reel and had a wide temperature range while staying clear and clean. The Rocket Fuel Yellow Label was introduced to the market in 1988, and following its massive success, the team at The Rocket Reel Company has since developed an entire range of tuning products to suit all reels used for distance casting. Visit www.therocketreelcompany.com for more information.



A nice double-shot of a small whiting and dab are drawn up the beach

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PLUGGING IN

Hard lures, or ‘plugs’, are the perfect tool for bass fishing, so we’re taking a closer look at what’s available and how they work...

This is the time of year that many anglers start thinking about summer fishing. This year there will be more people trying plug fishing for bass for the first time than ever before.

When starting out, it’s the basics that prove difficult, and one question always asked is how to fish specific types of plugs.

Although there are many different types of plug, for this beginner’s guide we will consider just three main types.

FLOATING PLUGS

It’s all in the name. These plugs float and work on the surface of the water, but there are different types that require a specific retrieve to get the best from them...

POPPERS

Surface popping plugs are designed with a hollow nose. When retrieved at the

correct speed they will momentarily trap air inside the hollowed out nose and as the air tries to escape as the nose works in the water it creates the distinctive popping sound.

When casting a surface popper, as soon as it hits the water, leave it there. Yes, it seems strange, but bass hear the splash as the plug hits the water and they will home in on the splash and investigate thinking it is an injured bait-fish struggling to swim. Bass will see the inert plug as a silhouette, assume it is an injured fish, and attack it while it just sits there. Bass like an easy target!

Bass that attack a lure, hit it, but still miss it, may return to hit the plug again if you briefly pause it again on the surface. This lulls the bass in to thinking its initial attack stunned the prey.

If there is no attack after 20 seconds or so, start to retrieve the plug. You do

this by flicking the wrist to jerk the rod tip to the left, if you are right-handed, and turning the reel handle to retrieve a little line to stay in contact with the plug at the same time. Do this for three or four seconds, then let the poppers pause for ten seconds or so, again half expecting a hit from a bass while the plug is

WALK THE DOG

Surface working plugs can also be used to ‘walk the dog’. This means making the lure swim from side to side. Different lures require slightly different speeds to achieve the best action for that exact lure, so experiment.

The plug should be retrieved just fast enough to achieve this action. If you work the lure too fast, a hungry bass is more likely to mistime the attack.



to this by again working the rod with the wrist and retrieving line. However alternate from fast to slow retrieves, and inject the occasional flick of the wrist to make the plug dart off at an eccentric angle. Plugs such as the Sebile Ghost Walker have a flattened, rounded belly. These sit in the surface layer of the water and, even at slow speeds, leave a wake. A faster retrieve increases the wake. Bass love a plug that leaves a wide wake and will mainly attack from behind and to the side, but also, with these lures, broach out of the water and use their weight to hit the plug hard.

FISH LIPS

Some floating plugs are fitted with lips underneath the nose. The lip makes the plug dive, nose down, as it is retrieved,

but stop retrieving and the plug returns to the surface. This recreates the swimming action of a baitfish that has a ruptured swim bladder, and is very effective.

The shallower the lip in relation to the nose, the deeper the plug will dive. Plugs with a near vertical lip under the nose will travel just sub surface.

Another good retrieve action is to flick the rod tip hard to drag the plug just under the surface, let it rise, then retrieve a few inches of line.

SUSPENDING PLUGS

Suspending plugs are designed to sink in the water to a certain depth, then hang there. After casting, let the plug sink on its own for a good 20 seconds or so, then flick the wrist and retrieve a few inches of line. This makes the plug lift its nose and jerk side to side. Now pause again and let the plug sink slowly. More often than not the bass will hit the suspending plug as it falls back down in the water. As before, experiment with different rod tip jerks and wrist flicks, also the speed at which you retrieve. A good example of this action is the Sebile Suspending Eel, which imitates an injured sandeel.

Alternatively work these slowly for a few seconds. Some will go deeper then allow them to lift in the water, and a steady, continuous retrieve is less effective than an unpredictable one.



Escaping air creates an attractive noise in clever surface popper lures

static. Repeat this process until the plug is literally back at your feet.

Also try speeding up the retrieve to make the plug work harder. Consistent fish catching plugs like the Abu Rocket Popper will, at a higher speed, also shoot water in front of them as the hollow nose loads. This scattering of water on the surface is again heard by the bass and imitates small fry scattering on the water. No bass can resist such a temptation to feed.

SIMPLE FLOATER

Another type of surface working plug is a simple floater. You induce action in



The Sebile Suspending Eel imitates an injured sandeel



Knowing what lure to use is an essential part of bass fishing



Ball bearings are used in very modern plugs to help the lure sink, but their rattling also acts as an attractor

DIVERS

Plugs designed to dive typically have a lip fitted at the front end. These are often intended to make the plug dive to a certain depth at a steady retrieve speed, but quicken the speed of retrieve and the plug will swim deeper.

It still pays to alter the retrieve speed when retrieving, and also periodically, every few seconds, stop the lure to let it sink while inert. This imitates an injured fish. Bass will take the moving lure, but often hit just as the lure is stopped.

Some modern diving plugs do not have lips, but use their own weight to sink. Ball-bearings are used to give added weight for casting and sinking, but these also create a clicking noise in the water that can also draw bass in to the lure. These can be fished at slow to moderate speeds, which creates a side-to-side wobble.

These are especially effective in deeper water over rough ground and when worked over the top of deeper weed beds.

HOW FAST IS TOO FAST?

The majority of bass are caught using lures fished at a slow to medium pace, but bass have a powerful tail that gives them a sudden and rapid acceleration that allows them to intercept escaping prey. Fast cranking of the reel handle and exaggerated use of the wrist to induce more erratic behavior to the lure will still catch fish, but expect the percentage of successful hits to fall quickly the more speed you add. Bass are similar to birds of prey, and sharks, with their kill rate about one in three.

Try to make a mental note each time you fish a lure just how many times a bass hits the lure, but misses the hooks. If the misses are greater than the hookups, this is an indication that the lure is being worked too fast. Slow down the speed of retrieve and you will catch more fish.

Finding out the best retrieve speed and style for each individual plug is trial and error. There is no instant answer. The above information offers a basic grounding to get you started, but spend the time and experiment to get the best from each individual plug. 🐟

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and Mark, who caught 49 and 45 fish
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HOW TO TARGET BOAT PLAICE

The plaice are making their way back in after spawning, so you'd better get ready...

As Christmas fades in to New Year, boat anglers start to dream of plaice. They're one of the first fish to show back inshore after spawning, and herald the dawn of a new season.

There's nothing quite like looking down in to clear water and seeing the brown, orange spotted back of a big plaice looming up from the depths. Be prepared,

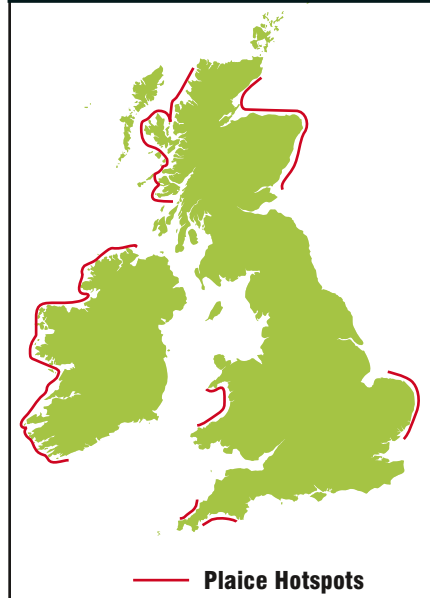
as this fish is capable of showing a sudden mood swing from one bait to another, preferring one specific rig or favouring one sequence of coloured attractor beads.

To catch boat plaice you need to have all bases covered.

SEASONS AND TIMING

The first fish, fresh from spawning, show over the sandbanks in the English Channel

+ WHERE TO TARGET PLAICE +



in February. These fish are thin initially, but quickly add weight, and by May are approaching full fitness. Even in the colder waters to the north of England, it's late February and early March that see the fish return, though in the North Sea, the inshore migration is usually more noticeable from mid March onwards.

They peak in condition and numbers from June through to September, but some of the biggest fish show later in the year from mid-September to late October and into November.

Large plaice can be caught in waters all around the UK



WHERE TO FISH

Plaice are found throughout the UK. Two areas stand out though, the Skerries Bank of Dartmouth and the Shambles Bank off Weymouth. Both these produce a large number of plaice throughout the year, though the Skerries seems to carry mostly small to medium-sized plaice, with the Shambles and nearby mussel beds seeing a run of bigger fish to 6lb.

Plaice can also be taken from ground off Portsmouth, Brighton, Newhaven up as far as Ramsgate with some fair plaice showing off both the Goodwin and Varne Banks.

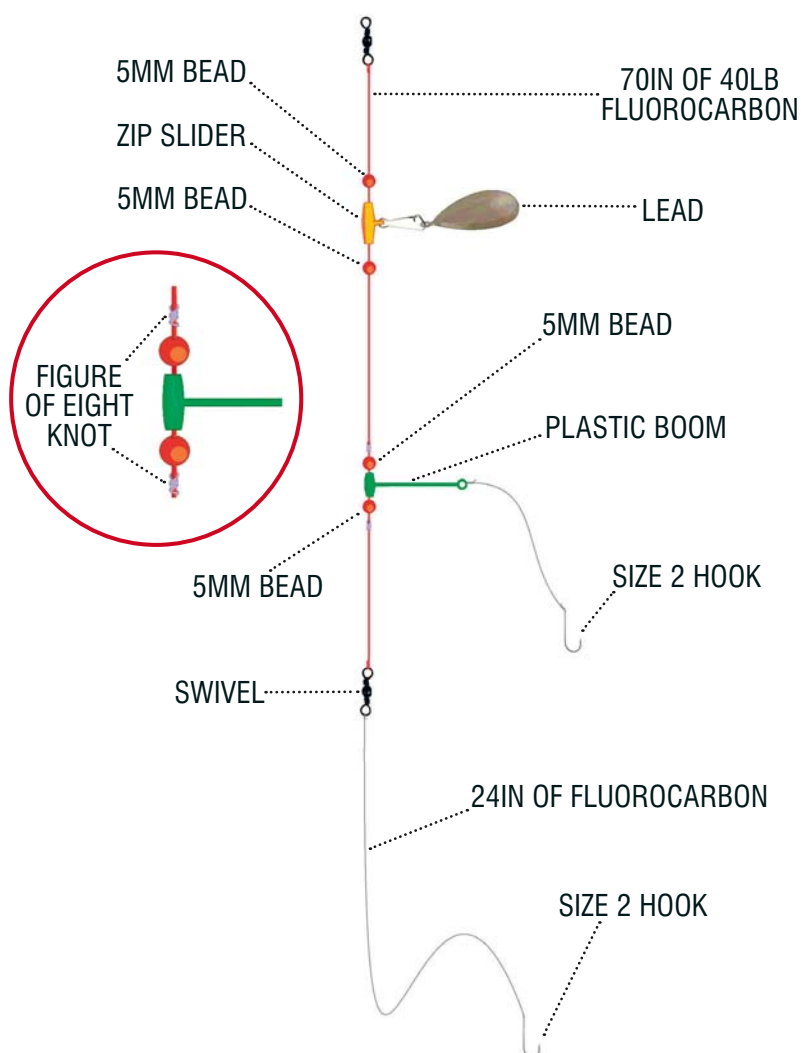
The famous patch of ground off Atwick in Yorkshire which, through the 1960s and early 70s produced some huge plaice over 6lb, still throws out a few.

The east coast of Scotland has a resident plaice stock, but there are few boats here to

*Gentle seas and clear waters
are the best conditions for
plaice fishing*



THE TWO-HOOK PLAICE DRIFT RIG



target them regularly. The Orkney Islands hold good numbers, but again few people fish for them. The Shetland Islands also produce some massive plaice, with 10lb to commercial methods. Definite hotspots are the many sea lochs along the western coast of Scotland. The Cumbrian coast, the north and mid Wales yield good numbers, but rarely bigger than 3lb.

In Ireland plaice are found all around the coast, and it's the smaller inshore bays along the southern and northwestern shores that offer the best chance. Good fish are taken inside Cork Harbour every year, and from the bays of west Cork and the Donegal coast.

TIDES

Plaice like a tide with some flow, but not too much. If the tide speed is fast they tend to hunker down in the sand and will not move unless food literally bumps them on the nose. When the tide flow is slow, the fish will see or smell baits, then hunt them down or intercept them.

Ideally you need a slow, steady drift of about two knots speed over ground. The stage of the tide is also important. Plaice tend to feed best the two hours after low as the tide speed gradually builds, but drop off during mid-tide race, and then pick up again the hour up to high. The ebb tide works much the same. This is a generalisation, but is applicable to many marks.

Plaice tend to sit on the downtide edges of sandbanks on the inclines, buried in sand.

The most likely spots are from the lower edge of the bank up the incline to about mid way, because food washed off the top of the bank falls at this mid bank height and collects from there towards the bottom.

WEATHER EFFECTS

Plaice don't like rough weather or big swells. They prefer settled seas with good clarity to the water – the best catches are generally made when the sky is overcast and dull.

Disturbed and heavy silt in the water rarely sees good fishing. Suspended matter in the water column restricts the vision of plaice, which are mainly a sight hunter with smell playing a secondary role.

TACKLE

Conventional plaice tackle needs to be kept as light as possible with the intention of preserving as much bite detection as possible.

A rod about 8ft to 8ft 6in and rated 6–12lb class is ideal. This will have a supple tip, but with power in the middle section and butt to work the fish with. This should be matched to a small 6500 size multiplier reel, or one of the low-profile 60 size

multipliers, loaded with 12 to 15lb braid and use a fluorocarbon leader of 15lb.

There is, though, a new way of fishing for plaice that is proving highly popular. This is to use one of the modern ultra soft tipped rods of 9 or 10ft in length. Good examples are the Shakespeare Agility Tipster or the Grauvell Etna 300. Good reels for these rods are 4000 or 5000 size fixed spool reels such as the Penn Conflict,



Chrome or coloured spoons work well for plaice

Penn Spinfisher, Abu Soron, or equivalent Shimano or Daiwa reels. These need to be loaded with 10 to 15lb braid, but again add a fluorocarbon leader a third as long again as the length of the rod.

When drift fishing, and especially when the speed of the drift is fast, the ultra soft tip allows the bait to stay static that second or two longer, which can result in extra fish. Also the soft tip helps to highlight shy bites, especially at long range when you have released a lot of line and are fishing well away from the boat.

BLING OR NO BLING?

Attractors, such as chrome or coloured spoons, can work well. Rig these by tying the spoon to a long hook trace at the base of a rig, or fish it off a boom and long trace, tie the spoon to the trace, then to the swivel below the spoon tie on no more than 10in of 15lb fluorocarbon. Slide three or four coloured beads on to the fluorocarbon and add a Kamasan B940 hook size 2 to 1/0.

You can just use the coloured beads; 5mm beads are okay, but 8mm are better. A good colour combo is alternate black and green. Also try red and white and red and

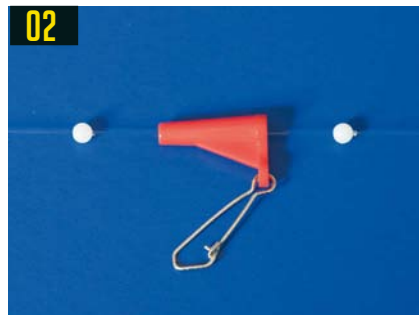
+ BUILD A TWO-HOOK PLAICE DRIFT RIG +

01



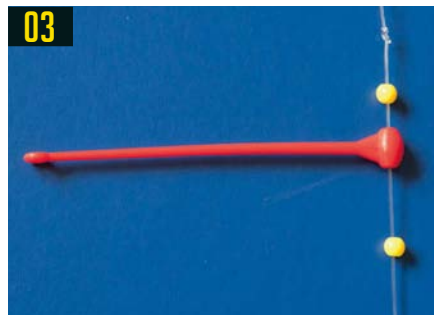
Begin with 70in of 40lb fluorocarbon. At one end tie on a size 4 rolling swivel.

02



Slide on a 5mm bead, zip slider boom and another bead. Tie a figure-of-eight knot 55in above the zip slider.

03



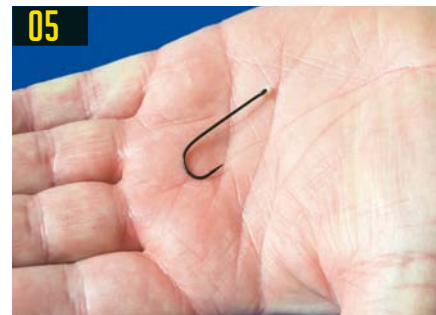
Now slide on a 5mm bead, SALT shore boom and another 5mm bead.

04



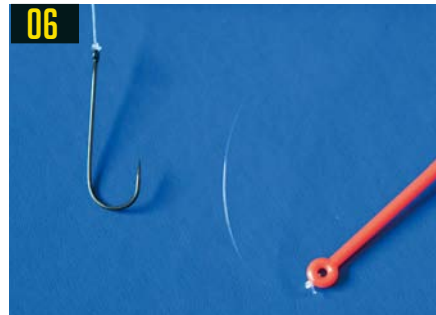
Just above the last bead tie in another figure-of-eight knot. Finish with a size 4 rolling swivel.

05



To the lower swivel add 24in of 12lb fluorocarbon and a size 2 Aberdeen pattern hook.

06



To the end of the boom tie on 10in of 12lb fluorocarbon and a size 2 to 1/0 Kamasan B940 Aberdeen pattern hook.

yellow. Single luminous green beads can also work well in low light conditions.

However, we mentioned plaice could be contrary on the day, sometimes they do not want bling at all, and prefer a simple bait with no attractors. Be prepared to experiment on the day with bead colours, spoons, and no bling at all.

BAITS

Often the best plaice baits are a combinations. A prime example is a section of black lug or ragworm, followed with a section of razorfish whipped to the lug with some on the bend of the hook. Then add a 50p sized section of fresh peeler crab and finish with a 5in sliver of squid to add movement. Don't be afraid to use big baits – plaice have very big mouths.

You can change the combination and use mussel instead of the razorfish and crab, use prawn instead of crab, cockle instead of the crab, and also use a fillet of launce sandeel instead of the squid.

Plaice eat sandeel as their primary food source for much of the year, so a good tip if bites are hard to come by is to go down to a size 2 or 4 Aberdeen hook and bait with a single fillet of launce just nicked twice



Plaice prefer cocktail baits, to plain ones and bigger baits are effective



Ragworm provide the perfect base for a plaice bait. Use beads for extra attraction

over the hook point to leave the full fillet to wriggle as it drifts.

Another good tip is to add a section of Isome sandworm or GULP ragworm or lugworm to your combination baits, as the amino acid in it can often trigger a bite you might not otherwise get.

TACTICS

It's a disadvantage to be positioned on the uptide side of the boat, that is the side facing

in to the oncoming tide. This means you need to fish a heavier lead weight and fish your line nearly vertically under the boat to avoid tangling the lines working from the opposite side of the boat. This is why we chose a rig with one hook hard on the seabed to have at least one bait in the fish zone all the time.

Good skippers alternate the side facing the tide with each alternate drift, so you must change the weight to a lighter weight

when on the downtide side of the boat.

Fishing on the downtide side, you need to release a lot of line fairly quickly, say at least 50 yards, but ideally three times the depth you're fishing in, or more. This sees your line enter the water at a shallow angle and tells you that both baits are fishing on the seabed. If the line is fishing vertically you need to release more line.

When enough line is released, hold your thumb on the spool and let the boats drift drag the bait over the seabed. Every 20 to 30 seconds, release another 10ft of line to leave the bait resting on the seabed. This pause allows a chasing fish to catch up and take the bait.

Bites are usually a series of rattles. When you feel these, immediately release line to let the fish eat the bait. After 30 seconds, click the reel in to gear to tighten down and feel the weight of the fish. The pressure on the rod is enough to set the hook.

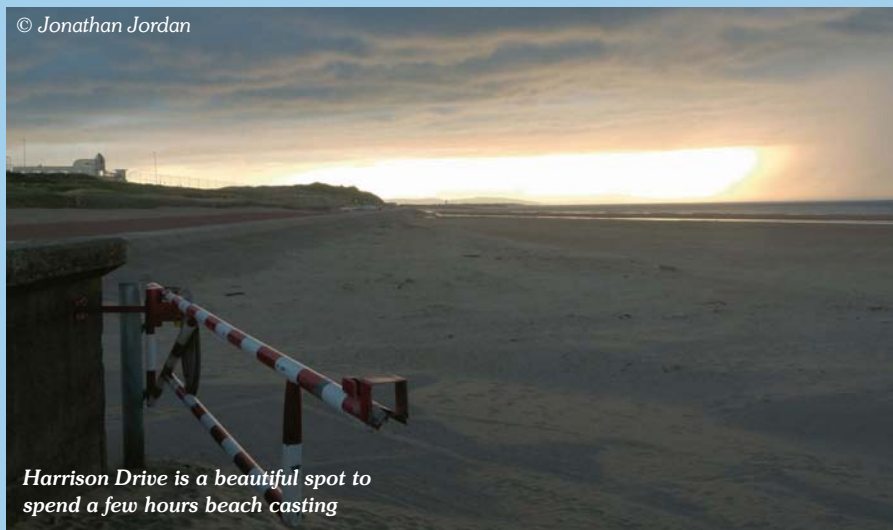
If you are struggling for bites, change the hook trace strength to a lighter 10lb or even 8lb fluorocarbon and use smaller baits. Also crimp a couple of SSG shot about 6in above the hook to help keep it tight on the seabed. ➤

© Andrew Stawarz



New Brighton lighthouse is a well-known landmark found right next to Perch Rock

© Jonathan Jordan



Harrison Drive is a beautiful spot to spend a few hours beach casting



Perch Rock

HARRISON DRIVE

PERCH ROCK

VALE PARK

MAKE YOUR MARK



PERCH ROCK, THE WIRRAL

This month we explore the area around Fort Perch Rock, New Brighton...

PERCH ROCK, NEW BRIGHTON

HOW TO GET THERE

From the south or west approach via the M53 motorway. From the east or north use the Kingsway Mersey Tunnel. Look for signs to New Brighton and Kings Parade on the A554. Perch Rock can be easily seen and accessed by turning left off the main road towards the fort. There is a car park and it is only a short walk from there to the beach.

SPECIES

This is a reliable year-round venue giving good mixed catches. April and May see mainly dab, flounder and small whiting taken, with a few school bass and plaice more commonly caught of late. May into July can see the odd thornback ray, with July into September producing smoothhound, though these tend to be smaller sub-8lb fish.

The numbers of whiting increase in September and then give good fishing right through to late January. Codling and cod appear in October with November good for numbers, but either side of Christmas and the early New Year gives the best chance

of any bigger fish. That said, this venue does not produce the numbers of codling that the marks further inside the estuary do. Autumn has also seen a few conger eels caught in the past few years. Dogfish are ever present.

TIDES

This mark is best fished the three hours before low water and for the first two hours of the new flood tide on the smaller neap to medium tides. The tide run is fast here and can be impossible to fish on the bigger tides. The tide will still be high up when fishing down the ebb but it strips back quickly. Taking minimal gear makes sense as you will have to move down with the tide as it recedes.

Daylight tides will produce well for smoothhound, but experienced anglers here prefer to fish at night for the other species, even though the water is quite deep. If you are targeting cod in the winter time, concentrate only on the night fishing.

Winds with some west in them tend to fish the best, though the mark will produce fish most tides. Some anglers say that heavy rain producing floodwater

that flushes through the estuary can adversely affect the fishing. It is also said that very rough, stormy weather out in Liverpool Bay pushes better numbers of winter cod into the Mersey.

TACKLE

Because of the tide run big leads are necessary. Most anglers use 5 to 6oz to make sure the baits hold bottom. This requires powerful 5–6oz beachcasters with tough reels such as Abu 7000, Penn 525 and Akios 7 series.

Best rigs for the rays and hounds are long and low rigs using a 40lb hook trace of fluorocarbon line and a single 4/0 hook. Many anglers like this rig for the winter cod as well, but use a two-hook Pennel system, again with 4/0 hooks.

BAITS

For the rays, mackerel and squid as individual baits or cocktails work well, as will big lug baits tipped with squid. The best bait is frozen sandeel wrapped in squid,





Fort Perch Rock was built in reaction to the Napoleonic Wars



Black lug (above) and mackerel are the favoured baits for this area



Fishing either side of the 'Brazil' buoy will get your baits onto clean ground

which helps keep the summer crabs at bay too. The smoothhound take peeler crab, which also picks up bonus rays and the odd bass.

In winter, black lug baits are best tipped with a couple of blow lug or ragworm for the codling and cod. Fish strips work well for the whiting, but for the bigger dabs use sticky black lug. Razorfish can be a good bait for the bigger flounder in winter too.

TACTICS

A favoured spot is either side of the green 'Brazil' buoy. The ground is pretty clear here, but the further to the right you go, the snag-gier it becomes.

Casts need to be no more than 80 yards; this will put you into the main channel and deeper water. Shorter casts to just 40 yards pick up the flatties and the whiting, especially at night.

Some anglers are now fishing this venue with big fixed spool reels and 30lb braid line with a 60lb shock leader. The thinner braid line

helps cut down on tide pressure and means you can fish a little longer and with improved bite detection. It is also worth having leads armed with longer wires than normal, up to 6in long when set. Wrap elastic bands around the lead and lower legs to hold them tighter. This again means you are fishing a weight that will hold out for longer when the tide really starts to run.

HARRISON DRIVE

A mile of beach backed by a promenade on the left side of Perch Rock. Best fished on a 28ft (Liverpool) tide or bigger with the two hours before and two hours after high tide the favoured period. This area will fish in the summer months through daylight for a few smoothhound, bass and the occasional ray.

The best fishing is from September to February targeting whiting, flounders, dabs and codling. Worm baits take the bulk of the fish, with mackerel or squid best for rays, and crab for the smoothhound.

VALE PARK

Lies to the north side of Perch Rock. Fishing is into one of the main Mersey Estuary channels off a clean sand bank. It fishes well through the spring and summer for plaice, flounders and dabs, along with bass, occasional rays, the odd smoothhound, and of late some conger eels. From September, whiting, then codling, and an increasing number of dabs provide sport all the way in to mid February, though sport peaks either side of Christmas.

Crab will take the majority of fish, with worm baits dominating through the winter. A fresh whiting is good for the conger eels, with the rays taking a cocktail of mackerel and squid. The best tides are spring tides over 28ft (Liverpool) fishing the three hours before low water and one hour after. Be mindful that the channels can fill with water behind you as the tide floods, so be vigilant. Either side of high water is also good. ➤

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SPECIES HUNT! LEADERBOARD

With only two months left until the Species Hunt comes to a close, we check in with our competitors...

Over 850 fish have been caught by 576 entrants to date, and we've loved looking at all your fish. The most commonly caught species this month have been rockling and flatfish, with the majority of these being caught close to shore on small baits and hooks.

Mark Harding's red mullet added some festive colour to the Yuletide fishing. Mark is currently in joint second position alongside Dave Young, just a few species shy of leader Ross Johnson.

SPECIES HUNT LEADERBOARD			
SENIORS			
POSITION	NAME	UPN	NUMBER OF SPECIES CAUGHT
1	Ross Johnson	129	31
2	Mark Harding	127	28
2	Dave Young	130	28
4	Dicky Smith	132	27
5	David Williams	106	25
6	James Clarke	131	24
7	KC Clarke	159	23
7	Will Pender	010	23
9	Mike Groves	019	22
10	Russell Farley	161	20
JUNIORS			
POSITION	NAME	UPN	NUMBER OF SPECIES CAUGHT
1	Oly Kucjy	041	34
2	Matthew Mason	246	10
2	Ciaran Farley	165	10
4	Thomas Mason	310	9
5	Ethan Casey	525	7
6	Oisin Foley	017	6
7	Ellis Hoey	148	4
8	Jamie Bayley	265	3
9	Eoin Foley	016	1
9	Dylan Daniels	505	1



Dave Young
Shanny
Alderney



Tony South
Pollack
Abbotsbury

Oly Kucjy is still dominating the Juniors' competition, and has caught the most species out of all the competitors, both Junior and Senior.

DARK HORSE

The current leaders had better watch out – a late entrant, Joe Shaw, has been steaming up through the rankings and is already sitting in joint eleventh place. Joe is certainly one to watch, and looks set to continue climbing the leaderboard in the next few weeks.

WHAT A WRASSE

Where this month's specimen catches were lacking in numbers, they were more than made up for in quality. James Clark's magnificent ballan wrasse is a fantastic specimen, especially when you consider it was caught on LRF gear. What a catch!

THE SPECIES HUNT IS ON!

The Species Hunt is open to everyone, and the aim is simple: catch as many different species of sea fish as you can from the UK shore before 31 March 2015. At the end of the season, there will be two Species Hunt winners, Senior and Junior (under 16 on 31 March 2015), who will each win £750 of tackle from Tronixpro and Breakaway.

The Specimen Challenge is also open to everyone, though its aim is to catch a big fish in one of 35 particular species.

SPECIMEN CHALLENGE CATCHES

NAME	UPN	LOCATION	DATE	SPECIES	SIZE (CM)
James Clarke	131	Alderney	26/12/2014	Ballan wrasse	55
Chris Redhead	109	Newport	02/01/2015	Small-eyed ray	53



Kyle Jones
Codling
St Brides

**For more information, visit
www.seafishingmagazine.com**

SPECIMEN!

We were impressed by James Clarke's specimen wrasse, caught on soft plastic



Joe Shaw
Leopard goby
Fishguard

SPECIMEN!

Chris Redhead
Small-eyed ray
Newport

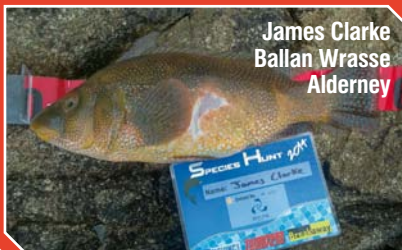


Mark Harding's red mullet added some festive colour to this month's catches



SPECIMEN!

James Clarke
Ballan Wrasse
Alderney



KC Clarke
Tub gurnard
Plymouth Sound

GET IN ON THE HUNT!

The Species Hunt is now in full swing, but you can still enter – you'll need to send an email to both seafishingcomps@blazepublishing.co.uk AND specieshunt2014@anglingtrust.net with your name, gender, address, date of birth, and contact phone number.

Visit www.seafishingmagazine.com for more information, news and results.

MONTHLY RIG

THREE-HOOK REVERSIBLE FLAPPER

One rig, three hooks, two ways.

Based on the basic three-hook flapper rig, which first appeared during the early 1970s, this rig, being reversible, offers more versatility. It also reduces the overall number of individual rigs you need to carry to cover varied situations.

It can also target a wide variety of species with only simple changes in hook sizes needed.

Although a favourite rig throughout the UK, few anglers stop to consider why the three-hook flapper is so successful. The rig positions three baits relatively close together, which produces a strong and

wide scent trail that washes a long way downtide. This covers more ground, but also makes it much easier for fish to then follow that scent lane to its source.

A major feature with this particular rig is that the three hook snoods are positioned to present the baits differently to target specific species. If you fish the rig to a tight line direct to the rod tip, the lowest hook will be on the seabed, or at worst in a lively shallow surf, lifting up and down bouncing on the ground in a natural manner.

With three hooks to bait up, this allows you to mix up the baits using different types on each hook. Swapping these around on

the hooks will tell you which bait, or baits, is taking the bulk of the fish. You can also experiment with combination baits. Again, this quickly identifies which is best on the day and you then change all three hooks to the same bait to maximize catches.

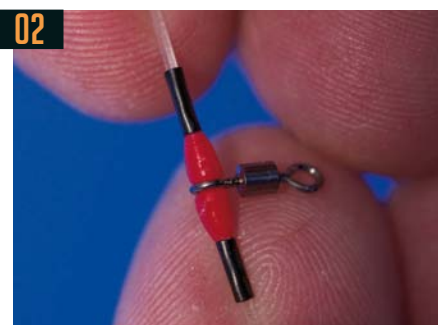
A common mistake is to make all hook lengths the same size. The lengths of the hook snoods on this reversible rig are deliberately tied as different lengths. When fishing to a fairly tight line at close to medium range, the full length of the rig will not sit flat on the seabed. Only the bottom hook is fishing hard on the bottom and consistently catching fish. The other

01 Start with about 64in of 60lb clear mono. Tie on a SALT lead link at one end.

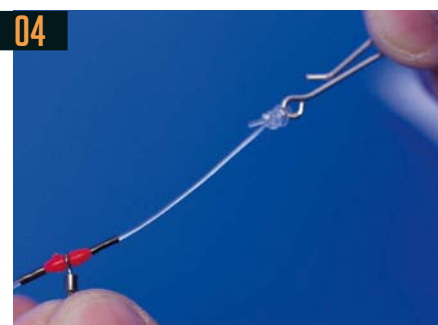
02 Slide on a rig crimp, a 3mm ovalised rig bead, a size 10 swivel, another rig bead and a crimp. Repeat this sequence to give you three full sets of crimps, beads and swivels. Leave these loose for now.

03 Complete the rig by tying on another SALT lead link to the tag end of the rig body line.

04 The first hook trace swivel needs to be placed just an inch below the top SALT lead link. The middle swivel should be positioned exactly 17in below the top swivel, and the third again 17in down from the middle hook trace swivel.



05 The top hook trace needs to be the longest at about 15in, the second hook trace measures 13in, and the bottom hook trace is the shortest at just 10in. All hook traces are made from 20 to 25lb mono or fluorocarbon, and are finished with a size 2 Kamasan B940 hook for general species.



two hooks, if tied on too short a snood, are suspended up in the water column and less likely to catch.

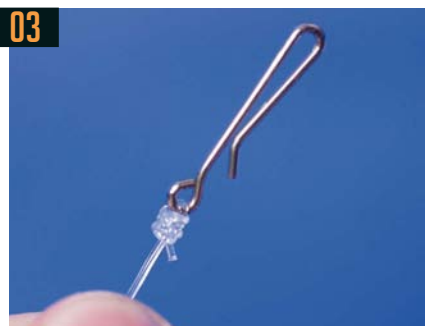
This rig is tied using a longer top and middle snood. This helps to keep the baits tighter to and in contact with the seabed and inside the main fish-feeding zone, even when the rig body is lifted by passing surf tables, without the need to fish a slightly slack line between rod tip and lead weight. The longer snoods also allow the baits to move more naturally.

You can also deliberately fish to a very tight line, and this will help lift the top two baits up off the seabed periodically when a surf table passes and can sometimes better target the more active swimmers such as coalies and whiting.

By having a clip link at both ends of the rig body, you can literally reverse this rig around. If all the fish are falling to the bottom hook with the lower hook trace positioned well up above the lead, reverse the rig so that what was the top hook, now fishes tight behind the lead. The middle hook is now positioned where the first one was before you reversed the rig around. This puts two hooks in the feeding zone, giving you the chance to potentially double your catches.

As initially stated, the reversibility of this rig increases your bait presentation options and reduces the number of rig types you need to carry.

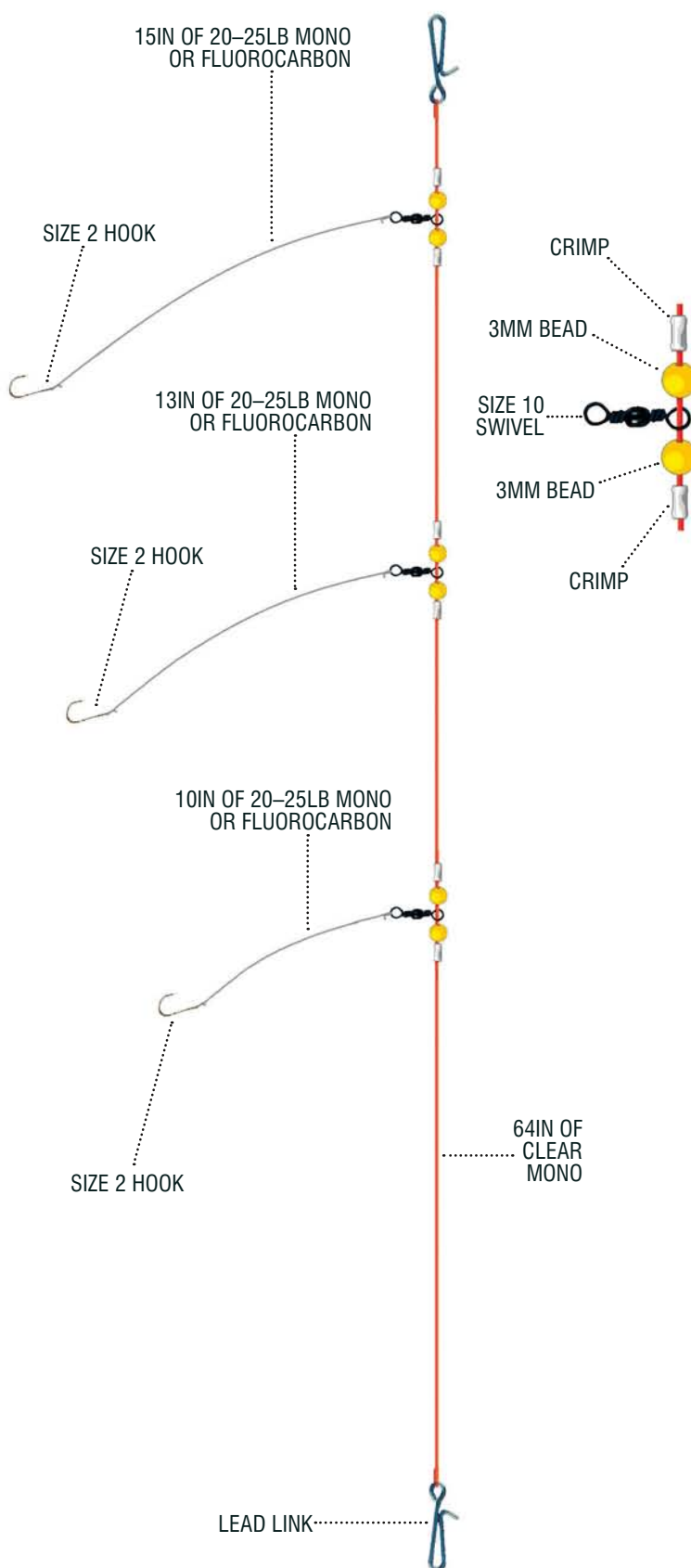
03



05



THREE-HOOK REVERSIBLE FLAPPER



THOSE BIRTHDAY BLUES

Sandor Kovacs targets blue sharks on his birthday and receives the best present ever

Like all anglers, I love the sea. I admire its creatures, and the wide variety of species keeps me excited. Whenever I catch a fish, I look into its eyes – this is what I call ‘the meeting’. There is this little moment of connection before I return the fish and watch it swim away, and I always remember that moment. That eye.

One of the species I always wanted to ‘meet’ was the blue shark, and I’d tried to do so three times before. Once was in Portugal on a holiday, but that was a disaster as I was treated as a tourist and not as a fisherman. So, after arriving back the UK, I went to those real fishermen and charter boats where you can, and will, get dirty, tired and

covered in chum. I wasn’t lucky straight away, but I didn’t give up.

ONE MORE TIME

I received another chance to meet a shark for my 30th birthday when a few spaces opened up on board the *Celtic Wildcat* out of Milford Haven, South Wales. I took my friend Zoltan with me. He had never caught a shark before either, but not for the want of trying. We were both filled with hope; we knew it was the late season and there had been lots of sharks caught recently, but we were with a skipper we never been with before and its always just a little mysterious.

BAIT PREPARATION

Well, our skipper Nick O’Sullivan

certainly seemed to know his stuff. On our way out to the sharking grounds we expected him to stop for fresh mackerel, but instead we steamed straight out to the sharks. He had three boxes of prime blast-frozen mackerel for bait – while the crew had all kinds of not very fresh mackerel and other fish species, even prawns and squid, to mash up and create the all essential scent trail we wanted to send out in the tide.

I was very surprised when Nick assembled his giant meat mincer in the rod stand, but it actually made a lot of sense. The freshly frozen mackerel went to the icebox, the rest went down on the throat of the mincer and became ‘chum’: bloody, gutty and extremely stinky. After being mixed with the



Phil Lewis battles with a 140lb blue shark

and acrobatics until we arrived at the sharking grounds. What a fantastic start to the day.

I had a walk around the boat to see what everyone was up to in the last seconds before we stopped, and found that everyone had their own preferences when it came to baits. The strangest was the good old squid, in large numbers on the hook.

The balloons made for excellent float set-ups. They blow up when the shark takes the bait down, so they won't cause any problems later.

LET US BEGIN

With all the gear set up, it was time for the chum to be released. The baits were released one by one into different depths to prevent tangles and to find what depth the fish were at. We were pretty confident but when in the first ten minutes one of the reels started to scream we couldn't believe it.

Unfortunately that shark went under the boat and managed to wrap the line around the propeller and the line snapped. But enthusiasm was still high and we were over the moon when quickly another bite came on another rod. Believe it or not, that fish was lost as well... and a few more after that. This

WHAT IS 'CHUM'?



Chum is ground bait consisting mostly of fish (usually mackerel) and blood. It is formed by mashing up said items into a pulp, which makes a strong scent trail when popped in to the water. Sharks are attracted to the blood and scent, so it makes perfect sense to set the chum trap and draw the fish to your baits as opposed to simply lying in wait.

Many skippers also have their own 'secret' ingredients, which are closely guarded. Good additives that are regularly used are pilchard oil, animal feed bran, sand (the sand holds tiny globules of the chum to help take the scent deeper), washing up liquid (which helps to create a bigger surface area and disperses oils quicker) and cooking fat (vegetable-based, which helps to calm the water surface where the slick is).

skipper's secret ingredients the chum went into the bags that were then ready to be hung on ropes over the side of the boat. No shark could resist this bloody fish pâté.

There was still time before hitting the spot, so wire traces were made and balloons were blown up for floats.

CALM BEFORE THE STORM

We were ready for the day and enjoying the freedom we had out there, far away from the busy workdays and stresses of life. Even the skies were promising, the light clouds mesmerising.

Just when we thought spirits couldn't get any higher, a pod of dolphins arrived and followed the boat. They kept us entertained with their jumping



Now that's some fresh fish... could use a little more salt, though



Sandor was thrilled to catch his first ever blue shark

SHARK FISHING REELS

Penn Squall

The Penn Squall Lever Drag is lightweight and ergonomic, made from corrosion resistant graphite. RRP from £149.99



Okuma Makaira

The two-speed, technologically advanced Makaira range is a favourite amongst shark and big game fishermen in the USA. RRP from £399.99

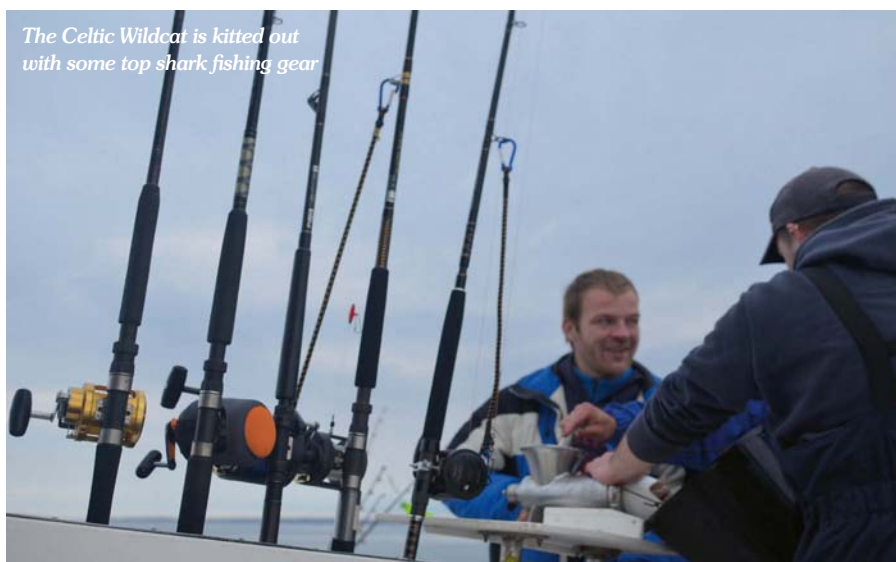


Shimano Tiagra

Shimano's Tiagra range are the worldwide market leader in Big Game Reels and are renowned for their reliability when targeting the biggest fish, year after year. RRP from £704.99



The Celtic Wildcat is kitted out with some top shark fishing gear



A 140lb shark was the highlight of the trip for Phil Lewis



was the moment when everyone started to play as a team, and that helped to produce the first blue shark of the day. It was boated quickly with the help of a rope, measured then released back to the depths... then Zoltan ignored the fact it was my birthday and took all the credit. That's what friends are for, eh?

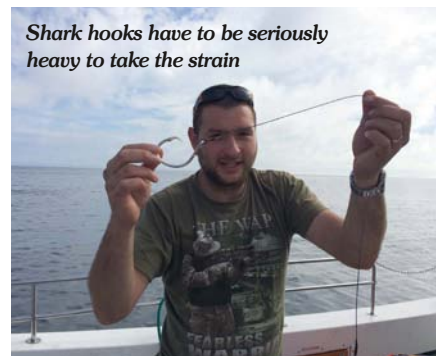
SUCCESS AT LAST

I felt it was my turn, so I double-checked the drag on the reel, then checked again to be absolutely sure. I released a bit more line off the spool then... I had a bite. I was so excited that I lifted into the fish a bit early; the shark felt the resistance and, after a second, it was gone – along with the whole rig, as the line broke in the mainline section. It was a really tough lesson to learn that when

the shark takes the bait, you'd better let it run a little before lifting into it. The sharks were really going for it so I had another take very quickly. This time the shark was allowed more than enough time to take the bait properly before I lifted into it. The fight was like nothing I have ever experienced. The ratchet screamed when the shark decided to dive – just the way I like it.

Then the unthinkable happened. Someone else's shark crossed my line and his wire trace cut my mainline. I was upset, but with the amount of action we were seeing I had to get set up again quickly. Everyone on board carried on catching but I didn't become disheartened and focused on my balloon float. Then I had a proper take, with a proper fight and this time we agreed to give way to the line that had a shark on the end, and everyone else reeled in. Everything worked out nicely and with the skipper's help I managed to boat my first ever shark. We estimated it to be 88lb, but for the fight it gave it could've been a much bigger fish.

Shark hooks have to be seriously heavy to take the strain



I just couldn't believe the number of takes we had. They arrived in packs, so if someone had a bite it was more than likely that there will be more soon. It went quiet for half an hour then started up again as another pack passed through.

MANY MEETINGS

With the next wave I managed to hook into another beauty. There were sharks boated all around me at 107lb, 120lb and even an enormous 140lb.

It was truly an amazing day, but I didn't really have time to celebrate because my reel once again went ballistic the the ratchet screaming. "Let it run, let it run!" I said to myself. Then, when the moment was right, I lifted into... something closer to a train then a fish, it seemed. When it ran I could not stop it; and when I when it stopped I could not move it. I felt like I was fighting something a lot stronger than me for the first time and it was frightening. I wasn't sure if I could boat this fish. After several being dragged around the deck a dozen times, I managed to bring the fish close to the boat. It took about 40 minutes in total to land this 144lb beauty.

As I always do, I looked into the eyes of this beautiful creature and it was fantastic, emotional – life changing even. Then it was time to release my big friend back into the water.

A BIRTHDAY TO REMEMBER

More sharks were caught that day, but my 144lb personal best was not beaten. Friendships were forged on this day and the memories will not be forgotten. 34 sharks were boated, with nine of them over 100lb. Many were been lost – but it's a part of the game. New personal bests were set and with everyone being happy, it was time to clean the boat and head home. ➤



What a great birthday – there were even balloons!

A 144lb blue was the best birthday present Sandor could hope for



FISH FINDER FILES

SEA SIGNS

Reading the sea is an age-old skill, which is just as important now as it was in past centuries...

When fish are breaking on the surface, they're being hunted by a predator below

We take for granted that a charter skipper will put us right on the fish using modern electronic technology. The reality is that good skippers use that technology in conjunction with good old-fashioned observation. How many times have you been fishing and heard the skipper say, "The birds over there are diving. Let's go take a look"? It so often pays off.

Reading the water is good seamanship. Using your eyes, and sometimes your nose, can increase your prospects of catching fish. This especially applies to small boat owners, but is also useful to understand when aboard charter boats as a paying angler.

These natural signs are second nature to seasoned sea fisherman. The observation of sea sign has been practised since man first sat astride

a log and ventured away from the shore. Technology has come a long way, but it can be enhanced by simple observation. When at sea, be aware of what is going on around you and you will become a far better angler.

BIRDS

Birds tell us so much. If you see birds, such as gannets, diving *en masse* into the water, this is a sure sign that baitfish are being pushed up towards the surface by larger predators. Making a beeline for this activity can quickly fill the bait box for the day. It can also indicate that bass or other big fish are at work under the mackerel, and working a lure deeper underneath the bait fish will target these predators.

Sometimes all you see are birds, such as gulls and gannets, simply sitting on the water. This can be read two ways.

It may be that the feeding frenzy is over and the birds are just resting after feeding heavily unable to fly off. Even so, it does not mean that the fish have fully dispersed and working feathers or lures through the area can again pay dividends. The alternative is that the birds may be waiting for the action to happen or resume. Birds sat on the water are always worth investigating.

DOLPHINS

When at sea, if you watch any porpoise or dolphin, they can tell you a lot. When travelling, they will keep going in a straight line, ignoring everything, only showing on the surface to breath. When hunting they will go around in ever tightening circles, stay under for longer, and show individually, the rest being submerged, harassing and rounding

sharks, at some stage you will see their fins break surface. Blues are often the culprit here feeding in twos and threes, sometimes more.

SCUM

Surface sign, during calm conditions, can also be much more subtle. When small baitfish shoal up on the surface they tend to show as a slight shimmer or very gentle rippled area that looks darker than the surrounding water.

If the shimmer stays as is and just drifts along, there are no predators working under them. It is always worth working feathers or a lure around this grouping, but watch carefully. It is often the case that suddenly all hell breaks out as a big predator suddenly smashes through, with the surface erupting as the baitfish scatter.

These killing zones can also show as areas of calm in a more rippled surface. This is the aftermath of a kill, with oil from the dead baitfish floating as a film on the sea's surface, calming the immediate water. Experienced skippers and anglers can smell the oil and will go looking for the feeding area. Usually, once the oil is on the surface, the best is over, but keep an eye out as other baitfish shoals are likely to suddenly appear, and the predators will be hunting for them.

SCUM

You will often see distinct lines of fawn or yellow scum when travelling at sea. These are most common after rough weather or storms. The mixing of various impurities, organic materials, salts, and decaying organic matter cause the foam.

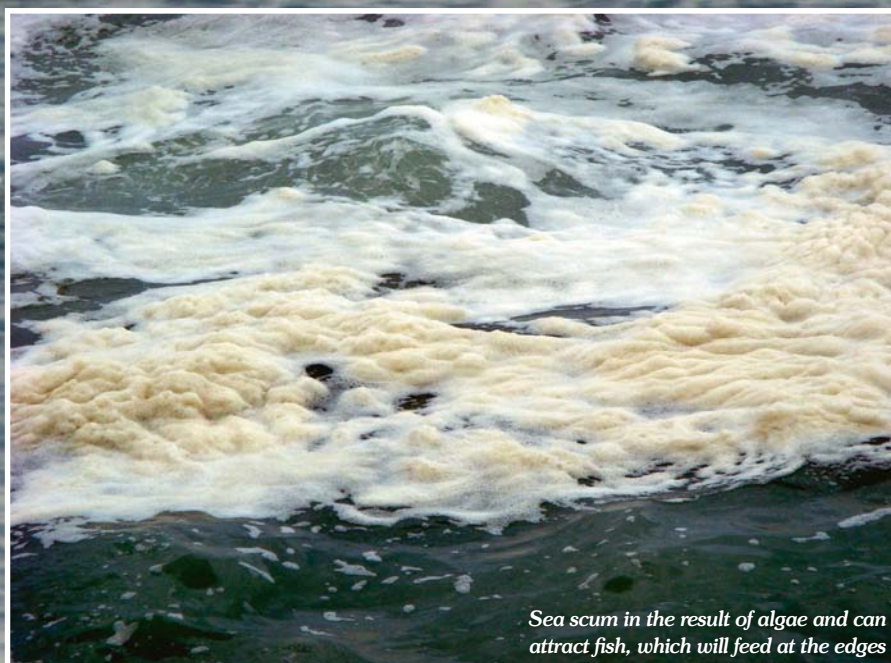
Good skippers and anglers will fish the edge of the scum line, as more often than not mackerel and herring will work the sub-surface layers, but even at depth this scum line has an effect with cod, bass, sharks, tope and other species running the edge of the line, feeding as they go. The predators do not necessarily swim within the scum line, but work in the clear water outside the scum and make brief forays in to take fish. 🐟



Birds will dive towards baitfish that are pushed up to the surface by larger predators



If dolphins are moving in circles, they are hunting fish rather than travelling



Sea scum in the result of algae and can attract fish, which will feed at the edges



DONEGAL DELIGHT

Mike Thrussell steams out in search of the famous *Cumberland* wreck for some hectic sport

Donegal, in the northwest of Ireland, has long been a favourite destination of UK sea anglers. Some groups have been going back, year on year, for over 20 years, such is the quality of the fishing. I've fished this area a half dozen times or more in the past 25 years myself, and I've always enjoyed incredible all-round sport.

One of the highlights is the quality of the wreck fishing. Though sad, the north Donegal coast was the route the supply and troop ships took into, and out of, western UK ports during the second world war, and the German U-boats were always waiting for them. The numbers of wrecks, known and unknown, off this part of the coast is staggering, but the horrors of war have left a legacy that provides the perfect habitat for fish.



THE CUMBERLAND

One of the wrecks that consistently fishes well is the steam ship *Cumberland*. She was 520ft long and grossed 10,939 tonnes. The U-57 put a torpedo into her on the 24 August 1940. She was carrying 9,000 tons of steel and general cargo, plus a locomotive. The loco broke its chains and ploughed through the bow creating a huge hole, which accelerated the sinking. The captain and 54 of the 58 crew members were saved. She now lies some 25 miles northeast of Malin Head in 52 metres of water.

A PROMISING START

I was due aboard *Vagabond* skippered by Charlie Lafferty with the intention of fishing this now famous wreck. Joining me were local tackle dealer Oliver Farren, sea angling advisor Norman Dunlop, and fisheries officer Mike Patton, who recently captained the Irish international boat angling team.

We left Bunagee Pier on a warm, sunny morning with a light easterly breeze. Pushing towards Malin Head the open Atlantic was pretty much flat calm with



Skipper Charlie Lafferty knows these waters like the back of his hand

WRECKED

The *Cumberland* is not the only famous wreck that became a fishing venue...

LUISITANIA

The *Luisitania* was torpedoed and sunk 11 miles off the Old Head of Kinsale, Cork, Ireland on 7 May 1915 by the German U-Boat U-20. She became famous for the catches of ling, pollack, coalfish and cod from the 1980s onwards, but is now said to be almost flattened due to corrosion.

Approximate position:

51°25'N, 8°33'W

HAMPSHIRE

The *Hampshire* was on her way to Russia carrying Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, when she is said to have hit a German mine. The wreck is classified under the Protection of Marine Remains Act, and is also a registered war grave hardly ever fished now.

Approximate position:

Two miles west off mainland Orkney

HMS FORMIDABLE

HMS Formidable was sunk by two torpedoes fired by U-24 on 1 January 1915, while on gunnery exercises. She lies some 37 miles off the Devon coast in 180ft of water. She is a registered war grave and a good wreck for big ling and pollack.

Approximate position:

50°13.14'N; 03°03.99'W

only a light swell. Surprisingly, a quick stop or two for fresh mackerel bait found them elusive, but we got just enough.

To get ourselves back in to full fishing mode, we stopped off briefly over a small inshore wreck, which proved to be paved with tub, red and grey gurnards, plus small pollack, cuckoo and ballan wrasse. The temptation to fish the *Cumberland* was too great, and we quickly turned the bows for the open sea.

I'd fished the *Cumberland* several times previously, but never on such a big tide. This was one of the biggest springs of the year and way bigger than I'd fished here before. Needs must, and we had to fish it, one way or another.



Oliver Farren had great results using baited muppets

SETTING THE DRIFT

The breeze had picked up slightly, just enough to give us some angle on the drift, but also helping to keep us over the metal for a good amount of time. We first chose to take a few drifts over the middle of the wreck, just to get a feel for how she was fishing.

Oliver was keen to get both a big ling and a big pollack, so set up with baited muppets on the three-hook rig. Mike, Norman and I chose a variety of shads and sandeels, the lads on flying collar rigs, while I went with a simple Whitby rig.

The tide was about three hours on the ebb, with low water around mid afternoon. We'd be fishing the peak flow for a while. The other lads went for heavy weights, but I decided to try a 10oz and found it ample. In fact, after less than an hour I changed to an 8oz, which kept my line pretty much vertical, and bear in mind that this was a huge tide. You would get away with 5oz, sometimes less, on the smaller tides fishing braid.

PLENTY OF FISH

I felt the weight hit the bottom and began a slow, steady retrieve. The shad was only a couple of feet off the seabed when I had a take and power dive from a pollack. This fought well, but was only a small fish of about 4lb.

Next drop I had a fish about the same size, and it was obvious, due to the tide pull, the fish were tight to the wreck. What is left of the *Cumberland* rises up off the seabed about seven metres, so knowing this I retrieved my lures for no more than ten turns of the reel each time to maximise my time in the fish zone. It was a fish a drop – pollack up to 5lb, as well as a codling of 3lb.



Devil's Own shads are Mike's own choice for wreck fishing



Fishing was hectic and codling were plentiful

RIGS

A good rig is a simple boom sliding ledger with a 6ft, 80lb mono trace and a size 8/0 hook. Bait with either a fillet or whole flapper mackerel. Two and three-hook baited muppet rigs also work well.

Most local anglers still fish a flying collar boom rig here when using lures, and it is effective, though suffers from tangles when the tide eases. I prefer a Whitby rig and have preferred this for my lure fishing over wrecks for the best part of ten years. It doesn't tangle when using a weighted shad or sandeel, is cheap to lose, and catches a lot of fish in all conditions.

Simply tie a 2/0 American snap swivel to the end of the shock leader. To the same swivel eye tie on 7ft of 25lb fluorocarbon line and attach the lure of your choice to the other end. Clip the weight in the snap link of the swivel and you're ready to fish.

TACKLE

If you choose to fish with big fish baits for the cod, ling, big pollack and coalies hard in the wreck, then a 20–30lb class rod and a reel with at least 300 yards of 30lb braid, and a mono shock leader twice the length of the rod.

I fished a 12lb class rod with a supple tip, but with power in the mid-section and butt, teamed with a low-profile 6000-sized Abu multiplier loaded with 30lb braid and a 15ft fluorocarbon shock leader. This avoids the fish seeing the braid, plus gives some abrasion resistance and protects the braid from contact with the wreck.

LURES

Top lures for this type of fishing are the Sidewinders, Savage Gear sandeels and shads, the Berkley Powerbait sandeel, and host of other makes and types.

However, my top lures are the weighted shads such as the Devil's Own in both 4in and 5in, or the Calcutta ones. You'll find the 5in won't catch as many fish as the 4in – but it will pull out the bigger fish, and often picks up the bonus cod and ling.

In clear seas with good light clarity I like to use translucent lures that the light can filter through. In slightly coloured seas, and when the sky is overcast, I change to red, rhubarb and custard, white or black, and find that the fish will have a definite preference for one colour on the day.

A word about hook lengths. For the pollack, 25lb fluorocarbon is a good everyday choice. However, if the fish are hitting the lure but not taking it, typically pulling the tails, drop down to 20lb, or even 15lb, and you will see your catch rate improve. Also try lengthening the hook trace to 9ft.

If you want to target the cod and ling more by keeping the lure tight in to the wreckage, change the hook trace to 40lb or 50lb fluorocarbon. This heavier diameter will combat the teeth of the ling and help fight abrasion, while remaining light enough to give life to the lure.

BOW DOWN

We decided to try a drift or two over the bow section. This was expected to produce more in the way of ling and maybe cod as we were aware that the loco punched a hole in the bow and there was likely to be a debris field littered around. This saw numerous pollack caught. I kept my lure fishing very tight to the seabed, in amongst



Norman Dunlop caught a number of coalfish above the wreck



Mike Patton lives up to his reputation with a brace of pollack

debris, which resulted in a savage take. This was a ling about 7lb, and on the next drift I took a decent red gurnard with the shad deep down inside the mouth. The fish were hungry.

The tide was easing away and I changed over to a 6oz lead, which even in 150ft of water was ample. As I did so, the lads decided to try drifting the stern of the wreck.

The first drop saw all four rods bent into fish – these were a better stamp too, at 7lb to 8lb. I was watching what was happening around the boat and saw Oliver hit in to a big fish, which smashed

him up. It was probably a big coalie, as they are resident on these wrecks in fair numbers at times. After re-tackling he soon hooked in to another good fish, a pollack of near double figures.

Mike and Norman were also hammering fish and, as we drifted off the stern on to what seemed to be a small debris field, we hit coalies to 4lb. These were up above the pollack and it proved difficult to get through them.

To give you some idea of the numbers of fish on these wrecks, I honestly didn't have a single drop without catching a fish – that is rare.

REFLECTIONS

The assessment of the day is that the size of the fish was slightly down on what I've seen in the past, as double figure pollack are usually common. The bigger coalfish and ling were also not taking on the day, and I've had coalies here to 14lb, and ling to close on 20lb in the past. However, I'd never fished such a big tide here before – maybe that had an effect?

DONEGAL ANGLING HOLIDAYS

Donegal Angling Holidays is a new angling initiative designed to make it easy for anglers to book a whole angling holiday package online. This includes Failte Ireland (Irish Tourist Board) approved accommodation, restaurants, and airport pick up. ➤

Visit www.donegalanglingholidays.com for more information.



Mike and Oliver with a coalfish and a pollack

HOW TO GET THERE

For the majority of anglers with a car full of gear, the easiest and quickest route is taking the ferry from Holyhead to Dublin Port. Getting out of Dublin now is easy and quick with the relatively new motorways in place. Follow the signs from the port taking the N3 for southern Donegal, or the N2 for northern Donegal. It's about a two and half-hour journey through great scenery.



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ARE YOU FISHING COMFORTABLY?

We take a closer look at clothing and footwear for anglers

MATERIAL OBSESSION

A lot of different materials can be used to make durable angling clothing, but there are a few that are more common than others. Here's a quick round-up of the materials your togs are most likely to be made of...



NEOPRENE

Neoprene (or polychloroprene if you want to get technical), was originally invented by DuPont scientists in 1930. In the wake of the second world war, French adventurer Jacques Cousteau used it to make his deep-sea diving wetsuits.

Neoprene is stretchy, resists abrasion well and is relatively inexpensive. In the sea fishing world, it is used to make waders as it's waterproof and provides excellent insulation against cold. Unfortunately, it's not as breathable as more expensive materials, so it can get rather sweaty.

Also used for: laptop cases, wetsuits, bandages, life jackets.



NYLON

Nylon was originally created by DuPont in 1935 as a synthetic substitute for silk. Since then, it has been adapted, developed and improved and is now used in all sorts of things.

While it can stretch, nylon can also bounce back to its original shape, and doesn't get damaged by oils, solvents or alcohols. It can be made into a durable, windproof, waterproof fabric that is also lightweight.

Nylon, therefore, is the perfect material to use in clothing for fishing. Coats, jackets, trousers and tackle bags can all be made out of this strong and reasonably priced fabric.

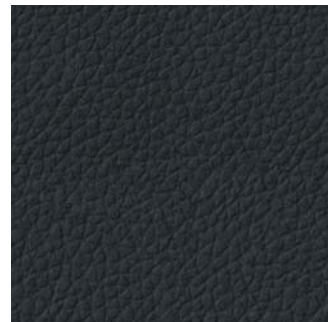
Also used for: tents, sails, fishing line, tennis racket strings.



DOWN

You're probably more suited to seeing down as a filling in pillows or bedclothes, but it is also used very effectively in cold-weather clothing. Down keeps you warm by storing air that's been heated by your body. The warm air is trapped in all the air pockets inside and between the feathers, keeping the heat in. The jacket will continue to get warmer the longer you wear it.

The major benefit of down clothing is that it is extremely lightweight and can be rolled up into a very compact parcel for storage. The downside (pun intended) to all of this is that these clothes can be very pricey. *Also used for: bedding.*



RUBBER

Rubber can be natural or synthetic. Both have very similar properties, though price determines which is used.

In its raw state, rubber is sticky when hot and brittle when cold, so to make it sturdier, it is 'vulcanised'. This means it is mixed with substances like sulphur and then heated up. This makes the rubber stronger, more resilient and more airtight.

Rubber is elastic, waterproof and resistant to tearing. Due to its great grip, it is used in footwear – for our purposes, in boots and waders.

Also used for: raincoats, sponges, tyres, paints, toys, shoes, electrical insulation.

BELSTANE MUCKMASTER BOOTS



The Muck Boot collection has been a popular choice for outdoor work and pursuits for years, and when you get your hands on a pair, it's easy to see why.

The calf-length Muckmaster boots have a tall rubber overlay for durability and strength, and are waterproof up to the comfort topline. Thermal foam, a moulded sole and a breathable Airmesh lining provide comfortable and warmth, so you won't be left standing in the cold.

- Colours: Black, moss
- Sizes: 4-13
- RRP: £95
- Contact: Belstane 01335 372601
www.belstane.com

TRONIXPRO NEOPRENE BEACH BOOTS

These basic, high-quality neoprene boots are perfect for shore and boat fishing. With a strong and waterproof neoprene upper and a strong rubber sole, the beach boots will keep your feet protected against surf, stone and sand.

- RRP: £34.99
- Contact: Tronixpro 01903 732567
www.tronixpro.com



TF GEAR ROCKHOPPER BOOTS

TF Gear's Rockhopper boots have been designed to take on the slippery UK coastline with ease, comfort and protection. High traction soles provide a secure grip on rocks and weed, while the tailored tongue and Thinsulate lining will keep you cosy. The Rockhoppers are also waterproof.

- Colours: Black, green
- Sizes: 6-12
- RRP: £69.99
- Contact: TF Gear 08719 117045
www.totalfishinggear.co.uk



SHIMANO 700 FP DOWN JACKET

If it's high quality clothing you're after, Shimano are the company for you. This down jacket is a dream: lightweight, warm and folding down into a tiny bundle for storage or transportation. It has a closed waist and wrists for superior insulation – and it looks pretty snazzy too.

- Sizes: M-XXL
- RRP: £249.99
- Contact: Shimano Normark UK 0330 333 4888
www.shimano.com



SVENDSEN IMAX COAST THERMO SMOCK

The Imax Coast Thermo Smock is generously cut for ease of movement, but is also padded to keep you warm through the winter months and out at sea. This practical garment is made of durable polyester microfibre and is completely waterproof, with taped seams, insulating filling and protected zipper. The three spacious pockets keep your hands warm – or your nick-nacks handy.

- Sizes: M-XXL
- RRP: £79.99
- Contact: Svendsen 01827 59659
www.svendsen-sport.com



Craghoppers NosiLife Cargo Trousers

The NosiLife Cargo Trousers are tough yet lightweight trousers, which feature nine pockets including a mobile phone pocket, a Dry Bag and drying loops. Insect repellent technology, UPF 40+ protection and quick drying fabric will keep you comfy whatever the weather.

- Colours: Pebble, Black Pepper, Olive Drab
- Sizes: S-XL
- RRP: £55
- Contact: Craghoppers 08448 111022
www.craghoppers.com



FLADEN MARINE OFFSHORE 903 JACKET

This feature-filled jacket is made of breathable, waterproof polyester, has a rollaway fluorescent hood, extra-high fleece-lined collar and dual adjustable cuffs that provide the same protection as a dry suit. There are two large outside pockets with Velcro, two zippered side pockets and two handwarmer pockets in addition to the four inside pockets and water-repellent window pocket for a phone or GPS on the sleeve. The jacket is finished off with safety reflectors and mounts for attaching a life vest.

- Sizes: M-XL
- RRP: £167.99
- Contact: Weymouth Angling Centre
01305 777771 www.weymouthangling.com

VASS-TEX 175 TEAM VASS EDITION BIB & BRACE

The Vass-Tex 175 breathable range was developed to provide anglers with the hardest and most waterproof fishing clothing around. Unusually lightweight yet strong and stretchy, the Team Vass bib and brace is comfortable without being restrictive.

The knees have double-reinforcement and the seams have been quad welded for extra water-tightness. The elasticated braces have quick release buckles and the lower ankles have a press stud fastening for easy adjustment.

- Colours: Carbon Black
- Sizes: S-3XL
- RRP: £55.96
- Contact: Your local Vass stockist
www.vass-tex.com



SEA FISHING HOODY AND BEANIE

When it's cold outside, there's nothing nicer than a cosy hoody to keep you warm when you're fishing. Available in two designs – *Sea Fishing* standard logo and "Hooked on *Sea Fishing*", it's the must-have hoody of the year.

- Special offer: £29.99

The *SFM* soft-touch cuffed beanie in a double layer knit is perfect for those chilly days out on the boat or the beach. You can collect tokens each issue or head online to buy one now.

- RRP: £9.99
- Contact: Sea Fishing Magazine 01926 339808 www.virtualnewsagent.com/sea-fishing





DEXSHELL WATERPROOF THERMFIT GLOVES

Waterproof accessory manufacturers DexShell have created a waterproof yet highly breathable glove that's perfect for anglers. Its triple-layer construction wicks moisture away from the skin and keeps your hands warm and dry even in the worst storms. The grip dotting on the palm offers excellent grip in all weather conditions, and the flexible fabric means you still have dexterity.

- Sizes: S-L
- RRP: £27.95
- Contact: Dexshell 01618 644666
www.dexshell.co.uk

DEXSHELL WATERPROOF OVERCUFF WADING SOCKS (IN-CUFF SEAL)

These knee-length socks are waterproof and have an engineered in-cuff seal to ensure that no water splashes in the top. A highly breathable, triple-layer construction keeps your feet and legs warm in cold weather and dry in the heat. The Wading Socks are intermittently submersible, so they're perfect for wading or fishing in rough weather.

- Size: S-XL
- RRP: £32.95
- Contact: Dexshell 01618 644666
www.dexshell.co.uk



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High UV Insect Shield BUFF® will keep your head and neck protected in summer or winter. Made with Coolmax® Extreme, the High UV Insect Shield BUFF® will wick sweat away from your skin faster than any other fabric, while offering protection from insects, sun and wind. There are no irritating seams or hems and the BUFF® is machine washable and non-iron. Designed to fit adult heads 53–62cm.

- Available in a range of designs
- RRP: £21
- Contact: Buffera 01707 852244
www.buffwear.co.uk



SNOWBEE SFT NEOPRENE STOCKINGFOOT WADERS

Snowbee use their innovative Seamless Fusion Technology (SFT) in their waders to give a flat seam that's less likely to chafe, while retaining the full 4mm thickness for complete water resistance. A microfleece inner lining and high back will keep you warm in winter, while the 'roll-down' facility means the bib can be worn comfortably around the waist in warmer weather. Other features include elasticated front adjusters, front pouch pocket, additional handwarmer pocket and PVC kneepads. Also available in bootfoot or thigh style.

- Sizes: S-XXL
- RRP: £149
- Contact: Snowbee 01752 334933
www.snowbee.co.uk

VASS-TEX 740E CHEST WADER

Vass have updated their best-selling Vass-Tex 740 heavy duty PVC waders, adding reinforced Vass Boots with a wider calf and foot fitting and selection of sole options, and D-rings on the chest. The high quality elasticated braces can also be used as a belt in waist position, while there's a safety draw-cord around the chest when you're in deep water. The seams are quad welded and the knees are reinforced for strength, and there's an internal chest pocket with a storm flap for your bits and pieces or valuables. Also available in thigh style.

- Sole options: Cleated, studded, Vass Mega-Stud
- Sizes: 4-13
- RRP: £99-£129
- Contact: Your local Vass stockist
www.vass-tex.com



MACWET LONG CUFF CLIMATIC SPORTS GLOVES

The "all grip, no slip" MacWet glove does what it says on the tin. Wearing these gloves whilst fishing will give you 100 per cent grip so your performance isn't hindered. The glove finishes at the wrist and has a thick elasticated cuff with a durable Velcro strap for a secure fit. The sweat-wicking Aquatec fibres in MacWet gloves keep your hands dry while the fleece-lined backing will keep you warm in colder weather.

- Colours: Black, brown, green, navy
- Sizes: 6-12
- RRP: £29.99
- Contact: MacWet 08456 039075
www.macwet.com

FLADEN THIGH WADERS

Fladen's affordable range of waders includes these great thigh waders. They're made from a waterproof nylon PVC, so they're sure to keep you dry when you're out in the surf.

Fladen clothing and waders are available from local and online retailers.

- Sizes: 6.5-13
- RRP: £42.99
- Contact: Fladen Fishing
www.fladenfishing.org.uk

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY...



GERRY PALMER, BATTLE TACKLE

Spending hours standing on a pebble beach, or paddling through the cold sea water wearing my Ikonix Countryman Boots is as comfortable, warm and dry as sitting at home in my slippers. Definitely recommended!



BARNEY WRIGHT

Whether it's summer or winter, what you wear when fishing can make all the difference to your comfort. I personally prefer lightweight attire. In the winter waterproof bib and braces, of which Vass is at the top of my list. I will layer up to keep warm rather than wear one big heavy suit, and then pop on waterproofing over the top. The summer will see me protecting my fair skin at all costs. Breathable clothing to cover my arms and legs, plus BUFF® headgear to protect my... ahem... high hairline.





BUSINESS AS USUAL

David Mitchell examines the latest in a long line of failures to protect UK fish stocks

Groundhog day. Déjà vu. Business as usual. Call it what you like but, despite a commitment to do things differently when the Common Fisheries Policy was reformed last year, the Council of fisheries ministers around Europe went to Brussels last month for the annual meeting to agree on fishing limits in 2015 and failed to deliver the goods for Europe's fish stocks.

Despite exceeding scientifically advised limits on what should be caught, and failing to agree on a single measure to protect bass stocks from impending collapse (scientists have advised a whopping 80 per cent cut in catches), ministers still returned home claiming significant wins and in Defra's case, "A fair fisheries deal in Europe". Fair for who? Certainly not for fish stocks, the environment or sea anglers (who have been warning about the mismanagement of bass for decades only to be routinely ignored) or even the general public who, despite not having a direct interest in fishing, expect their elected representatives to manage a publically-owned assets in a way that's best for the nation as a whole.

For over two years the European Commission has urged the Member States involved (France, UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium) to come up with a plan on how to manage bass, but in vain. So much for the highly praised "regionalisation" embedded in the reformed CFP; "annihilation" seems the better term in this case. The system is broken and on the evidence of last month's meetings I can't see what the much-lauded reform of the CFP has done to change things. Credit where credit's due, however, and despite the UK's failure to gather enough support to reach an agreement on bass, it has very quickly moved to 'plan B' and called on the European Commission to take emergency measures to protect bass. This would mean closing the winter bass spawning grounds to targeted trawling of bass between January and April when they are most vulnerable and when catches,

often by the use of a pair of trawlers working as a team, are most damaging to the adult spawning population – on which future generations of bass will rely.

Technical emergency measures are the last chance saloon for the EU to protect bass stocks in 2015, and it is far from clear whether any measures that the Commission produces will do anywhere near enough to reduce the amount of bass killed that scientists have advised. Not to mention that the measures will do nothing to control the small scale fishing sector or 'mixed fisheries', which contributes to an estimated 40 per cent of all bass killed. It's not known whether the emergency measures will include a bag limit on recreational catches, something that was proposed but not agreed upon last month. In any event, emergency measures are limited to six months with the possibility of being extended for another six months and are only a short term fix while a medium and long term solution is thrashed out. In the meantime the Angling Trust has

thrown its weight behind Defra in support of the proposed emergency measures, while at the same time insisting that the UK should also be taking its own measures to protect UK bass in UK waters. The assumption that all bass migrate to the Western Channel to feed and spawn is a myth – although it might have been true once. The fact is that bass are now spawning around much of the English and Welsh coasts and there's much that could be done to protect these fish at a UK level, which would benefit the fish and the UK recreational and commercial fishing industries.

If you want to help put pressure on the EU to deliver the emergency conservation measures put forward by the UK, you can by visiting the Angling Trust's bass campaign section of our website at www.anglingtrust.net/bass where you'll find details of how to email the new EU Commissioner for Fisheries, Mr Karmenu Vella, and make your voice heard. ➤



Pair trawling is damaging to the adult spawning population of bass

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CHESIL

CHALLENGE

Gareth Davies reflects on a trip he enjoyed at Chesil just before winter began to set in...



Steve Gregory with a cracking bream from Chesil



Harry Asprou with one of many gars that fell prey to quality baits

There isn't a sea angler in Britain that hasn't heard of the wonders of Chesil beach. With miles of fishable ground, stunning panoramas and a list of target species as long as your arm, Chesil really is a paradise for us.

Never was it more so than in the mild weather we had in the autumn. Extended warm spells meant that more fish stayed close to the shore than have done so in recent years, and I was keen to take advantage of the situation.

In late October, I gathered my league of extraordinary fishermen for an 'anything goes' fishing expedition to the beach. Making up the group were Ian Tyledsley of Ammo baits, Saint Ives; Steve Gregory, a top big fish angler from South Wales; Harry Asprou, and his exceptionally talented son Mario, who captained the Welsh juniors in Montrose earlier this year. Specimen fanatic Mike Groves came along as well, hoping to extend his list of species with a varied haul.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

The game plan for the day was simple. Cod had been showing off Chesil and, as we had fished on Llangenith the day before, bagging bass to 5lb as well as large flounder and golden grey mullet, we wanted to cap the weekend off with a good haul of cod and bream. Ian supplied the team with pristine AMMO blast frozen small-sized squid and sandeel, not forgetting the superb Welsh blacks that were used throughout the day. Mario had feathered for some mackerel and we had plenty of the fresh stuff to help bring in the garfish and rays.

SPICE OF LIFE

We decided to park near the Ferry Bridge (post code DT4 9XE). If you want to scratch you have it all in front; if you want mackerel and gars you're really spoilt for choice through the summer into autumn months. If you can hit the distance then your options open right up with rays, bream, bass and codling on the menu. I hear on the grapevine that tope can be

taken in certain areas too. The fish list for Chesil is endless. I think you could fish here a lifetime and still be surprised by the varied and diverse species available.

HE WHO DARES, WINS

Base camp was set up after a 20-minute walk to the right of the car park where our lucky Welsh flag was positioned.

There was a sort of nervous anticipation as to what would hit the beach first and who would be the lucky one to bag a cod or black bream. It's always surprising how competitive we all get when setting up to punch the first bait out. We'd decided to fish high water with a view to fish out the ebb and a few hours of the flood; this meant using heavy gauge grip leads between 5oz and 6oz, and straightforward flapper rigs, dropped into the deep water. Distances would vary as some of the big hitters were smashing pulley rigs way out using the easterly wind to our advantage, given the water so clear and settled.

It was obvious that gars were working the shallows, with the odd surface ripple

Mike Groves with a pretty little gurnard



the codling – a pucker little fish of around 2lb, taken on yellow tail and a pulley rig, the sort of set up we use back home on the Welsh beaches.

Ian was quietly hitting fish, with gars and gurnards coming in steadily through the morning on his flapper rigs. Ian takes great pride in his presentation and certainly knows how to handle himself on the beach, with some great bass catches over the years. He had a proper rod-rattler of a bite and at first thought he had snagged up. When things started moving, we realised that he had a clonker of a tub gurnard weighing well over 3lb. It was a cracker and one of the biggest I have ever seen.

INTERESTINGLY

Author Thomas Hardy called Chesil Beach “Dead Man’s Bay” because so many ships have been wrecked there. The wrecks are home to many species and account for the huge variety of fish to be caught.

BREAM DREAMER

Steve had been plugging away for a good while, varying his casting distances and baits. He

dropped a three-hook flapper baited with a mix of worm and squid approx

70-80 yards from our elevated shingle platform. Was he going to get lucky? Well yes, the jammy so-and-so.

He had a good solid pull down and slack-liner, and being an old hand at this game, Steve wasted no time leaping to his feet. Isn’t it amazing how a good bite instantly transforms you from a mellow daydreamer into a stealthy hunter? Rod in hand and eyes locked onto your rod tip, your breathing shallow and adrenalin sending your heart rate through the roof... it’s a magical moment each and every one of us knows well.

After a good few minutes of steady pressure, it was obvious this fish was a good scrapper, which meant it was likely to be a bream or bass. Mike was waiting at the water’s edge, ready to lift Steve’s fish out.

“It’s a bream!” he shouted. “A bloody good one!”

What a great moment for us all. Weighing in at 2lb 14oz, Steve’s shore-caught bream topped off what had already been an active day’s fishing. Not long after Steve released his prize, I hit a smaller bream of around 1lb 8oz.

giving them away. After an hour or so, it was time to break out the lighter float rods. I use a Fox Warrior 3lb test curve coupled to a small fixed spool loaded with 10lb mono, which can double up for mackerel feathers casting an ounce or so of lead. We selected a sliding float set to about a 4ft drop with size 6 or 4 Aberdeen hooks. A little strip of either squid or mackerel is a deadly bait.

GAME ON

Steve, the old master caster, was eagerly putting no-nonsense pulley rigs out using his impeccable off the ground technique.

It’s always a pleasure fishing with Steve as he recounts many great moments of big fish tales from decades of fishing the large rays from South Wales, not forgetting some huge cod both he and his lad Darren have caught from past and present day.

Baits were mixed cocktails of yellow tail and squid or frozen black mixed with fresh worm, all with the potential of pulling something special out.

The guys began to get bites – nothing slamming but nonetheless fish were obviously present, which was a huge relief having travelled three and a half hours to get there. Mario had started well with the mackerel then upped his game, pulling out several garfish. He likes to use a small bass-type rod of medium action with a Shimano Baitcaster fixed spool with 8lb running line and 20lb leader. For the heavier stuff, he likes to use either a Century Tip Tornado Sport or Super Match coupled to a Daiwa SL20SH. Mario’s rig choices were pulleys and three-hook clip downs, and he favours clear 12lb Asso line, with a good quality leader of minimum 60lb when distance casting.

OUR TUBBY FRIEND

I was lucky enough to be the first to hit



Mario lived up to his “Fish Magnet” nickname as he landed gar after gar

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*Ian Tyledsley
of AMMO baits
was rightly
proud of his 31lb
plus tub gurnard*



**TOP
TIP**

Gareth says: "I favour Zziplex Primo Full Tournaments with my faithful SL20SHs – absolutely bombproof with 18lb F1 and 80lb leaders. You can put baits out a long way with a well timed pendulum cast."

SUMMER SUCCESS

All in all, the day turned into a major success. Amongst the smaller fish, Mario had a gar weighing in at 11lb 10oz, which was an amazing catch. We had all caught some good fish in that Indian summer of October, but now the warmer weather has vanished and the cold winter months have

set in.

Indeed, now that the sea has changed and the codling have hit the beach, Chesil is really coming into its own. Night tides really are your best bet, and keeping up with the latest news and catches online will prove invaluable when you go out to catch your fish of a lifetime. 🐟

WEARY FLOUNDER

Simon Everett meets England international **Kenny McCoy** to find out all about the flounder fishing on the Wear estuary

It wasn't so very long ago that the Wear was one of the best flounder rivers in the country. Regular matches were held along its banks and to be in with a chance of winning you would need to have a bag of 40 flounders, each of them around the 1lb mark. Hundreds of anglers would line the banks and catch them, two or three at a time, and take them to the weigh-in. There was no such thing as 'catch and release' then – conservation? That's for those soot'ern Jessies mun.

Well, the constant pressure took its toll and the massive flounder stocks dwindled to next to nothing, for no other reason than the catch and kill weigh-ins. They certainly weren't targeted commercially; they had no value other than points on

the leaderboard. With the waning of the fish stock, the entries and the competitions faded into obscurity. Gone were the serried ranks of rods, and the happy banter between the competitors echoed away, out to sea with the tide.

Happily, those days are behind us and the Wear is beginning to come back as one of the major rivers for catching flounders. But you won't see hundreds of rods lined up – it is now a place where you can easily find somewhere to cast your bait out and prop your



Kenny with his haul from the day's fishing



rod up. We met Kenny McCoy, who is an England international angler, so he could show us the tips and tricks needed to catch the Wear flounders.

THE VENUE

The venue for this session was near the National Glass Centre. This venue fishes best on the flood, but will also fish on the ebb and the bigger tides are more productive.

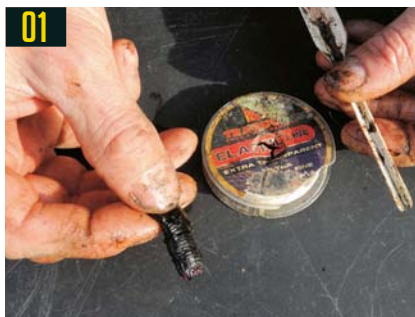
There is a dredged channel in the middle of the river and a good cast out into this catches the most fish, but you can get among the feeding flounders from 40 yards out – just be mindful of the rocks and weed lining the edge of the bank under your feet so you don't get snagged on the retrieve.

THE BAIT

Years of experience has taught Kenny that the best bait here is frozen black lug tipped off with a small piece of

+ STEP BY STEP TOOLS OF THE TRADE +

Kenny has a clever tool for helping to create small baits, to make them neat and keep them on the hook. His tool is made from a corner-covering piece of double-glazing plastic with the edges sanded smooth. In the bottom, a small piece of rig foam is glued in place to hold the trace taught while the bait is whipped onto the hook with fine bait elastic. Here's how he does it...



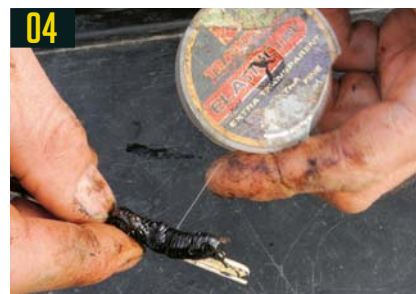
Slip a bait onto a size 4 Kamasan hook.



Place the baited hook in the end of the tool.



Trap the trace in the foam at the opposite end to keep the line taught.



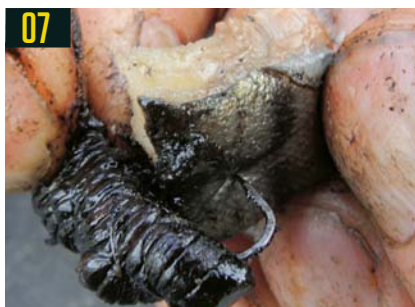
Wrap the worm with bait elastic, going over the tool and worm.



Continue until the worm is secured in place on the hook shank.



Push the wrapped worm off the tool with your thumb.



Add the sliver of mackerel or bluey to tip off the hook.



The result is a well presented, delicate bait.



*A double shot of flounders
fell to Kenny's special baits*

these on a three-foot trace of 15lb red Amnesia, because it is soft and allows for better presentation. A simple but carefully prepared one up one down rig is the favourite, with the bigger bait being put on the top hook.

The tide can be fierce and, when it's in full flow, a 6oz lead with grips might be needed to hold bottom, as it slacks off you can drop down to a 3oz flat lead. A shock leader is a must because of the need to cast heavy weights and the casting distance required. You also need enough strength in the system to pull your lead out of the glutinous mud on the bottom. Steady strain will eventually drag your gear through it. Once out of the suction you can keep a little bit of

mackerel or bluey. If the crabs are being too much of a nuisance then leave the fish strip off. Peeler crab is another bait that works well occasionally, but really it is the black lug that accounts for the most fish. Remember: it has to be frozen, not fresh. Big baits appear to be counterproductive in that they attract more crabs and, over the years, small baits have proven to be more reliable fish catchers and seem to last longer.

THE GEAR

Small hooks work best for presenting the delicate baits. Kenny prefers the Kamasan in a size 4, and he fishes



*With a fair wind Kenny can put a bait
under the steps on the far side of the Wear*

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Eliminator T1000: The Eliminator® T1000 is built and designed for fishing demanding conditions – large boulders, kelp and fast tidal streams. Initially it feels very powerful but this is deceptive because it bends and recovers gradually to release this power smoothly from the middle power bands in the butt: adjust your timing, control the flow and T1000

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movement on your rig by leaving it for a minute or so, if you don't get any bites try winding in just a foot and leave it for another few minutes. The movement, even in the murky depths, does alert the flounders and seems to stir them into action.

THE SEASON

The season for the flounder starts in the autumn and carries through to the New Year, with the bigger fish, some up to 2lb and more, showing in the later stages of the season in January and through to February before they move out to deeper water along the coast. The actual timing depends very much on the weather, and with the mild winters we



NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE: ACCESSIBLE VENUE

The National Glass Centre sits on the banks of the Wear at Monkwearmouth in Sunderland. It's a very accessible fishing spot, making it an ideal mark for any angler. The car park is beside the river and it is an easy going 100 yards to the fishing. For disabled anglers access is just as easy. There are benches to sit on, or the hard path will prevent wheels from sinking into the grass area bordered by the wooden fence that makes for an ideal rod rest. There is plenty of room for casting, just watch out for cyclists and walkers also using the path.

Postcode: SR6 0GL.



are having now the season is extended. In contrast to most estuary fishing, the Wear actually fishes well when there is plenty of fresh water coming down the river. As well as the flounders, there are some good-sized whiting to be caught here and the odd codling puts in an appearance from time to time, giving variety to the bag.

THE GOAL

Our mission was to catch the famous flounder and get a taste the fishing of yesteryear, which is rapidly returning to its former glory. The tide was already on the flood when we set up downstream



The flounders at this time of year are small, but there are plenty of them

ATOR[®] T1000

delivers smoothness over all casting styles. The low rod diameter, the ability to handle large baits and big weights at long range will appeal to anglers that fish the hardest conditions, multiplier or fixed spool, braid or monofilament and still want a rod that is comfortable to use.





Kenny with a double shot of flounders from the Wear



Unlike most estuaries, the Wear fishes better when higher levels of fresh water are present. Don't be put off after heavy rainfall when the river is awash with fresh water!

of the Glass Centre, just a short walk from the car park. Our pitch was right opposite the corner of one of the old quaysides on the opposite bank. Three cranes remain as a reminder of the busy yards that lined the banks of this famous shipbuilding river. This is one of Kenny's favourite spots and with a good cast he can reach the entrance to the old dock on the far side.

With his one up one down rig Kenny cast to the far side of the river channel. Adopting his tactics, I cast my baits halfway across the river, about two-thirds of the distance Kenny was achieving, but in the taking zone. The rods were propped on the wooden fence ahead of us, next to a dog rose growing through it acting as a wind break, we stood and waited for the tell-tale rattle of a flounder bite.

THE CATCH

A few passers by took the time to ask us what we were fishing for. They seemed incredulous that there were any fish in the river, thinking the heavy industry of yesteryear must have left a lasting legacy of pollution preventing any life to survive. Like most estuaries around the country, the river Wear has been cleaned up and again has a healthy stock of fish, including salmon and sea trout, which was welcome news to the enquirers and they went on their way chattering about the change that has taken place.

Soon after they had left, Kenny's rod tip danced to the attentions of a flounder and another one of the river's flatties came over the fence. I gave my rod a bit of a heave and pulled my baits across the bottom a few feet and let the baits settle again. Kenny was getting double shots of small flounders on a regular basis. Home advantage and local knowledge gave him the edge, obviously. However, perseverance soon paid off and my rod nodded to a bite. I let it develop and when the rattle came again I lifted the rod and leant into it

while winding at the same time, to lift the weight out of the mud. A little Wear flounder came to the surface and I lifted it over the fence with a broad smile. I wasn't going to win any competitions with it, but I had achieved a goal: my first flounder from the river Wear. That gave me confidence, an important and often underestimated element in fishing, which resulted in me catching a couple more before the tide slacked off at high water. We had a great little session, just for a couple of hours that resulted in about a dozen flounders between us and a couple of whiting for Kenny, who was reaching the deepest water.

The river Wear can definitely be relied upon to produce a few flounders and, as the winter progresses, they put on weight and some large ones can be counted among the bag, with January and February being the best months. March can produce but in fewer numbers as the flounders head back out to the open sea. Being so accessible, this urban fishing is available to anyone and is not so weather dependent as the open coast. You could even just go for an hour after work for a bit of fishy fun. ➤



HART

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The new collection of Rock & Street soft lures consists of small soft baits, made from flexible vinyl. Accompanied by new **Micro Jig Heads** for tiny perfect mounting.

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■ Contact: Daiwa ■ 01698 355723 ■ www.daiwasports.co.uk



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■ Contact: Leeda ■ 01527 587450 ■ www.leeda.co.uk



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■ Contact: Fladen ■ 01305 821111 ■ www.fladenfishing.org.uk

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■ Contact: Veals ■ 01275 892000

■ www.veals.co.uk



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■ Contact: Lure Heaven ■ 01566 770822

■ www.lureheaven.co.uk



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■ Contact: Pirate Boats ■ 01646 602030 ■ www.pirate-boats.com



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■ Contact: Mr Fish ■ 01534 618886 ■ www.mrfishjersey.com

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The FS Surf is well suited to medium to long-range fishing on clean to mixed rough ground. Other features include Zirconium oxide guides, an engraved aluminium reel seat, hand grips in appropriate places and it comes in its own rod bag.

■ Contact: Shakespeare ■ www.shakespeare-fishing.co.uk



SCOUTING A NEW MARK

Fishing at a new mark can be intimidating, but **Adam Landy** is here to help with a two-part, foolproof guide on how to make the most of it...

There is no doubt about it – fishing is getting harder. With reported over-commercialisation and changing climates, anglers need to think outside the box; find new venues and approaches to help boost catch rates, or target specific species. The culture of the ‘travelling angler’ is growing, with more and more rods traversing

the country to target specific fish. With some sites’ stocks diminishing over time, it brings to the fore the need to start to explore our own doorsteps a little better, seeing what secrets we can unlock in our own localities.

FINDING A LOCATION

In days gone by, the methodology for seeking out new shores would involve

digging out old maps and having a perusal. Nowadays, with the huge array of smartphone apps and digital programmes available, we can scout out territory to a much finer degree, almost instantaneously, without the need for swathes of creased up paper maps and magnifying glasses. I like to use Google Earth, but there are many other options for the tech-savvy angler.



TOP TIP When visiting a new mark at low water, try to pick a big spring tide so as much of the area as possible will be exposed. It's even better with a wind coming off the land to hold the sea back for longer.

Alan Brown still uses hardcopy map techniques, collating information gathered about coastlines, which when combined with the drilled down information gleaned from an online terrain map, creates a wealth of information for the thinking angler.

SITE VISIT

Before I fish a venue for the first time, I like to do a couple of site visits, preferably one at low tide and one at high water. For both visits I will take a camera and a notebook.

During the low water visit, I take photographs of how far down the beach the tide withdraws, any features in the landscape between low and high water (i.e. snags), any indications of deeper water, channels, banks or weed beds. This is a prime opportunity to look for signs of natural foodstuffs: worm beds, shellfish and so on.

Low water is also a good opportunity to gauge the terrain further out. Taking a rod, reel and a couple of plain leads can allow you the chance to mentally picture the lay of the land. Casting out a plain lead and then performing a slow retrieve will allow you to feel out the contours, dips and troughs. Moving up and down the beach or casting at angles will allow you to build a wider mental profile of the ground.

Google Earth is effective as an angler's tool

Where I live, there's 52 miles of varied shoreline to explore. It's quite unrealistic to imagine I would walk and explore all of this with a view to building a picture of where and when. With Google Earth, I am able to take a virtual tour of the coast, so I am able to see the features, access, egress and so on. This makes for a much speedier process when building a profile of a new venue, or just finding one from scratch.

But we don't have to totally neglect the traditional methods; often it's best to combine old with new. *SFM's*



TOP TIP

Make notes of where you find worm, razorfish or mussel beds when scouting at low water. These will attract fish on the flooding tides.



Look for places that will provide shelter – or collect baitfish – when the tide comes in

weed passing through it may give an indication as to currents and tidal speed.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Local knowledge and experience can save a whole lot of time and heartache when it comes to researching a new venue. If experienced locals already know a venue is minimally productive, it might be wise to move on and find another spot. (It's also important to remember that others might not want you to know about their quiet spots.)

My first port of call is often my local tackle shop. If anyone is going to have their finger on the pulse, it's the local tackle shop owner. Pop in for a coffee and a chat and talk to them about your ideas for the mark. In all likelihood they know someone who has fished it, have fished it themselves or have insight into why it isn't a great spot. The majority of tackle shop owners want people to fish, so on the most part they are happy to share such information.

If you are lucky enough to know some seasoned or knowledgeable locals, it is well worth asking them for advice and guidance about the mark in question. Entering some local matches will expose you to some skilled anglers, where listening to them, or asking them for advice can be very helpful. There is a lot to be said for taking a timeout and listening to our peers and seniors.

Next issue, Adam looks at social media, tackle and etiquette. ➤

My high tide visit is slightly different. I like to go on the largest tide available so as to figure out what my egress situation is.

When going to a new venue, particularly alone, personal safety is a key consideration. This also helps gauge the depth of the beach, as you can compare the high water pictures against the low water ones, and will help you figure out how to reach certain features, what distances to cast and where you can safely wade. Also, if there is little room left at high water, should there be a sizeable swell it may leave even less beach and for safety's sake, you may decide to leave sooner in such conditions.

It's best to perform these visits during daylight hours, as if there is any surface



The local tackle shop is an invaluable resource, especially if the mark is new or unfamiliar

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SIGNS OF HOPE



Codling have brought all the anglers to the beaches, but is this a blip or the start of a renaissance for sea fishing? **Nigel Farage** explains...

In recent years I have moaned hard about the lack of anglers around these days and the fact that too few youngsters are taking up our sport. I have good news: Dungeness beach was packed solid virtually everyday and evening between Christmas and the New Year. Why? The codling are back.

As with bass and all other fish stocks there are a number of factors that affect the number and size of fish around. Whilst we blame overfishing I believe that nature still plays the biggest part. As a boy in the 1970s I was told that the cod had a seven year cycle, booming and busting like our stock markets. When I think over the forty years that I have been casting lugworms from the shore, I now really do buy into the theory. The good news now is that there are real numbers of codling now within

casting range – not many over 3lb, but still fun.

This is all good news for the tackle shops, bait diggers and local businesses, but angling being what it is, the conditions on the day still make a difference between success and failure. Only the bigger tides have produced any number of fish and the calmer the conditions, the poorer the results. If we don't get a very cold period then these fish will be around into the spring; just wait for a southwesterly wind on a good-sized tide and load up the car.

The next few years will depend wholly on overfishing. If enough of this year's fish survive the next couple of seasons we'll see 5-8lb fish being caught from the shores in reasonable numbers. I am looking forward to next autumn already – and seeing lots of people on the beach. ➤



Q & A

SFM's team of experts tackle your angling issues

If you have a question for our team, email barneyw@blazepublishing.co.uk or write to *Sea Fishing Magazine*, Blaze Publishing, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 5SZ

The editor reserves the right to amend letters for reasons of space, brevity, legality and sense

Every month, the entrant who sends in the best question will win a fantastic prize from our sponsors, Tronixpro. This month's winner will receive an HTO Lure Game 8ft spinning rod worth £54.99. All other entrants will receive a full box of rig winders worth £8.99 each. The HTO Lure Game rods are designed with UK bass lure fishing in mind and the 8ft version works small topwaters like a dream and is light enough to be able to hold all day. Modern screw reel fitting and single leg guides combined with the rods matt black finish and retro graphics give these rods an original look. The bestselling Tronixpro rig winders keep rigs neat and tangle free, and are easy to store away for future use.

LUGWORM SPLIT

When I dig lugworm I always seem to split or cut the worms when using my spade or fork. Is there a better digging tool, or am I just very bad at it?
James Anderson, Norfolk

JOHN POPPLEWELL ANSWERS...

Firstly digging lugworm with a spade is a non-starter. 90 percent of your worms will be cut in half, the reason being that you can only dig back 8 or 9-inch spits comfortably which will lead to major casualties.

Use a fork instead. The best is a flat tined fork, also known as a potato fork, as this will hold even the softest sand. You can get away with a normal fork, but if you intend to do any amount of digging then the latter is the way forwards.

Try and pick an area on the beach with a group of worm casts that are close

together, and then work on a plan of action; mark the intended digging area off with a line on the fork and then dig to that line. There is nothing worse than small potholes all over the beach. The first spit of sand in a new hole should always be dug with the tines of the fork only half way down in the sand, as it is almost impossible to lift without breaking the fork.

Always infill your hole as you are digging, so each dug spit is turned into the previous one, this way the beach will recover quicker.

Split lugworms are in fact a great bait, and they toughen up and take on a leathery quality, so don't throw them away. Try and take a smaller container to put your splits in, as if you leave them with the live lugworm they will quickly turn them and they will all die. Split worms can be wrapped in newspaper as soon as you get home, and will last a few days in the fridge.



Dig carefully to avoid damaging the worms



SLIPPERY WHEN WET...

What is the best way to secure footings on slippery rocks and weed areas?

I love to go rock fishing in South Wales, but after a storm or when it's raining I am nervous to as I always tend to slip a little and am afraid of having a serious accident.

Allan Friend, Newport

GARETH DAVIES ANSWERS...

I use the cleated soled boots either in wader or welly form, which helps to keep your footing when out and about. But the most important thing is that you must be aware of what you're actually walking over. By this I mean is it seaweed-covered rock, slippery plain rock, patches of weed or simply wet rock? If it's completely weed covered, then it's a simple case of going as slowly as possible and use a stick or rod rest to poke the ground in front to be sure you're not stepping into a covered hole! No type of footwear will prevent a fall in this case, just caution and common sense.

If you can see where the rock is below the weed, try to step onto the rock and avoid the weed if possible. Loose rocks can be a problem too – again, going slow is your true defence. Keep your knees slightly bent when walking so that any sudden slip can be absorbed – essentially

use your knees as shock absorbers. Never step onto a slippery surface with a straight leg.

For even more grip, boots can also be fitted with tungsten studs, or some even come with them on.

These give really good purchase on

slippery surfaces, even snow and ice. But, again, just because you've got studs it doesn't mean you can't slip.

When stepping on thick weed, there is no way the studs will punch through the weed to the rock for grip. They will bite into the weed, which will move and you will be on weed skates! So when in a thick weed area, wiggle your foot until you feel solid rock if you can. Slow and steady wins the race.

There are many brands on the market and it's worth checking out a few pairs before buying. Try Gary Evans' shop in Newport. He will have a good selection and, with many years' experience, they will ensure you get a well-fitting boot that should last year years.

The very best tip is: don't go to dangerous marks alone. Take a friend and a phone and you shouldn't go far wrong.



You should ideally change the line on your reels after every trip

TOEING THE LINE

How often should I change the line on my reels? Some say every trip, others say every other trip. Is this too often as I have had line on my reels for several trips and things have been okay. Have you got a definitive answer?

Andy Hubbard, Southampton

BARNEY WRIGHT ANSWERS...

Ideally every trip – and the line manufacturers will love you. However, it's not practical, and a lot depends on where you're fishing and the kind of seabed you fish over. Line takes on some serious stresses during a session, even on a clean beach as the sand will act like sand paper. Worse is rough ground, especially rocky, as the line will constantly be rubbing and running over rough surfaces. As a general rule, if clean beach fishing, change lines after half a dozen trips, but over rough ground every other.

As for the 'definitive' answer, it's safe to say that maybe every third or fourth session change the line regardless of

condition. It's not only abrasion but also the elements can weaken line, especially in the summer time the sun is a line killer.

It's fine checking and changing line when at home, but it's also good practice to pay attention when fishing too as the damage happens at this time – and the best way to identify any is when retrieving. With a multiplier this can be done every cast as the line is fed to the spool through your fingers and you will be able to identify wear and tear. But with a fixed spool it's not so easy, so try to run the line through your fingers every few casts or so – it is awkward, but worth the effort to be sure you have no weak points.

The problem is when you identify weakness or do indeed lose a lot of line on a snag. A top tip is to carry spare line and re-spool there and then or, for expedience, have pre-loaded spools just in case of any damage, as the line could break at any moment and most likely when you haul into the fish of a lifetime! Don't risk it.



SHINGLE BEACHES

How do I pick a specific spot to fish on a large shingle beach, and how do you go about fishing this type of venue over both winter and summer months?

Adrian Evans, Paignton

MIKE THRUSSELL ANSWERS...

If the beach is a shallow surf beach backed by shingle, the tide will go out way beyond the base of the shingle. Use this time to have a look for features like gutters in the sand, deep depressions, areas where sandbanks are formed, patches of stone and boulder. All these areas will collect food and hold fish as the tide floods in. Position yourself where you can cast to one of these and you should catch fish.

If the beach is steep-to and the sand is not exposed at low tide, walk the shingle high tide line and look for areas where bottles, weed, wood and other floating debris collects on the high water mark. This indicates where a tidal current hits the shingle and this will bring food in to the base of the shingle and again this immediate area will hold fish. Alternatively fish the ends of the beaches where the shingle meets rocks, as this is always a good spot to find fish.

Also look at the sea surface and try to identify areas where the surface chops up more, or there is a definite divide line between maybe clearer and dirtier water. This is a coming together of two currents, and putting baits close in to this divide line will more often than not prove successful.

You often find that the majority of anglers will group together near where they can fish close to their cars. Make more effort and walk well away from the others. This means your bait will be on its own and not competing with others giving you a better chance of catching fish.

The best way to fish shingle beaches is using two rods. Cast one out as far as you can, but fish the other either where you thin the junction of shingle and sand is, or just out beyond it where advancing fish will come across the bait. A good tactic is to fish one big bait at long range for summer rays, or winter cod, but use a two or three-hook flapper on the close in rod to target whiting, dabs, school bass, whiting and many other species.

Big bass are also more likely to be caught on a big bait dropped close in within close proximity of the sand/shingle divide line, especially when there is a good surf running.

SFM'S EXPERTS



BARNEY WRIGHT

An all-round angler who favours shore fishing and is also an accomplished tournament caster



MIKE THRUSSELL

A brilliant shore and boat angler, with a huge wealth of experience and knowledge



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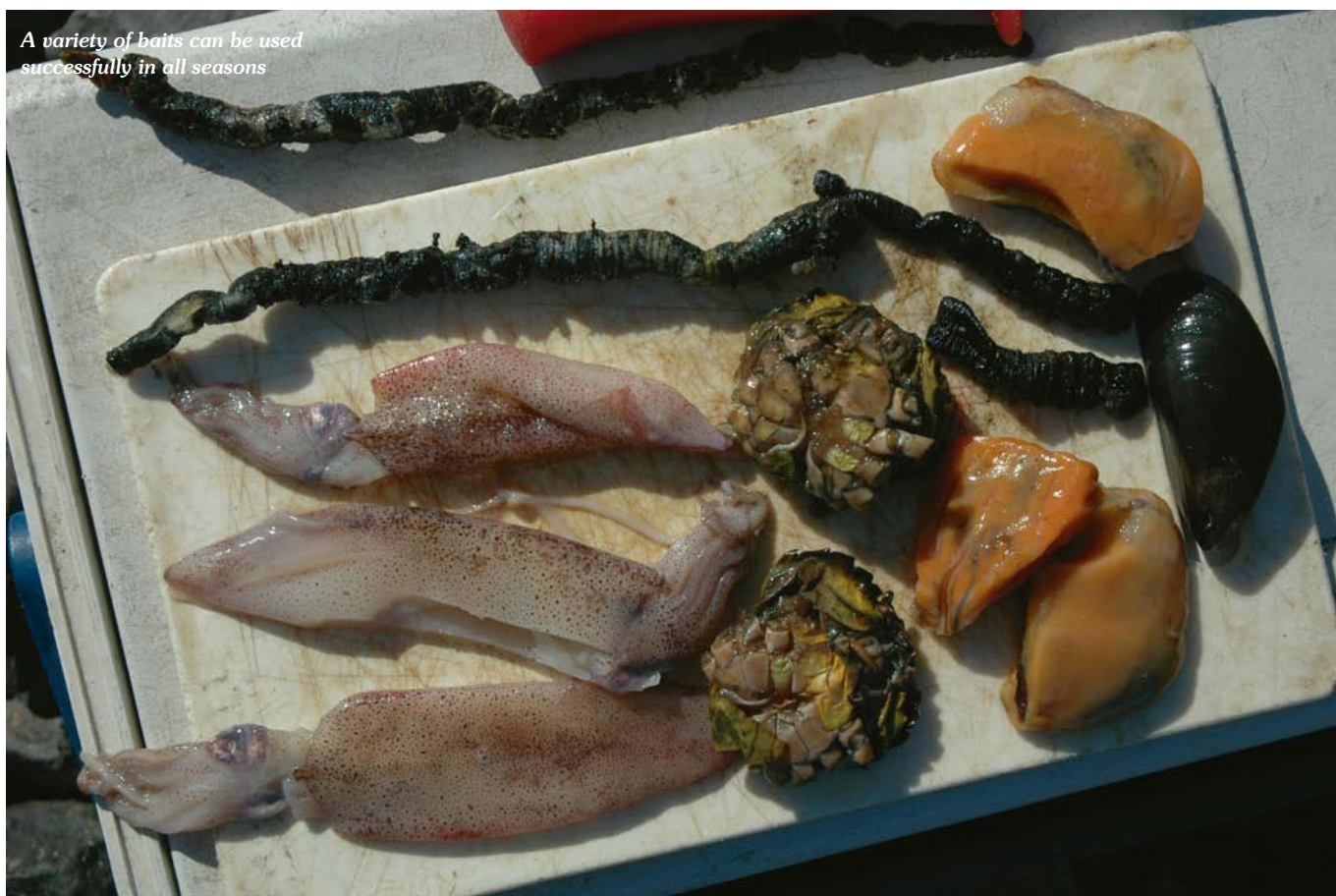
SIMON EVERETT

A top sea angler, and one of the few fully qualified kayak instructors in the UK

Use two rods when fishing shingle beaches so you can cover more ground



A variety of baits can be used successfully in all seasons



SEASONAL SPECIALS

I'm confused as to what baits to use to target different fish species throughout the year off the shore?

Mr M Barnes, Torquay

MIKE THRUSSELL ANSWERS...

Lugworm is a good bait all-year round in most areas and will take winter dabs, whiting, codling and coalfish, as well as smaller species such as pout, poor cod and rockling.

Ragworm falls in to the same 12-month category, taking mainly the flatfish and codling.

In the springtime and early summer, for bass and flounder, especially inside estuaries, peeler or soft crab is king. Peeler remains a good bait throughout the year too, if you can get fresh or have a supply of freshly frozen crab.

Sandeel is a top bait for rays, especially small-eyed ray, dogfish, surf turbot and bass. Fresh is good, but frozen works well too, and when fished under a float will capture bass and pollack, as well as mackerel.

Mackerel is much the same being good for the rays, dogfish and bull huss, fresh or frozen. In wintertime, both the sandeel and mackerel strip will take whiting, dabs, dogfish and codling. Mackerel strip is also excellent for winter flounder when fishing off the surf beaches. Squid strips are good for dabs, black bream, with whole squid a top big bass and cod bait, also good for rays and huss.

Mussel is a good bait for winter flounder, codling and mussel, but will also take bass. Razorfish is good for winter codling and flounder, also autumnal bass. Cockle also fishes well for dabs, flounder, and small species such as whiting.

You can also mix these baits and make combination baits. Good combos are lug tipped with rag, crab, squid or mussel for cod and bass. A sandeel tipped with a 5p coin sized chunk of mackerel can enhance a ray bait. Crab tipped with mackerel is good for big flounder. There are scores of combination baits to try and all will work on their day.

Fresh bait will always give you a big

edge, but plenty of anglers, myself included, have to rely on frozen baits for quite a bot of our fishing due to work commitments and lack of time to collect our own. You will still catch plenty of fish on frozen baits, so don't worry too much if fresh is difficult to come by.

Crab and shellfish are both good baits





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TAKE A BREAK

Ben Harrison reveals the secrets of a popular Welsh hotspot – Holyhead Breakwater

Stretching 1.7 miles into the sea off the northern end of Anglesey is Holyhead Breakwater. A fishing platform second to none, the breakwater has been a haven for various populations of anglers for many different reasons, for many years. We love the place, and the amount of species available to the average angler is massive, particularly in the summer months.

The fact that you can regularly bump into genuine world class international anglers plying their trade on this structure suggests that there is something to be gained from fishing it.



READY TO GO

The very end of the breakwater was our starting choice for the day, and we were armed with a bucket full of peeler crabs and crinklies (paper-back or hard-back crabs), and some fish. The target species for the day: smoothhound.

Walking up the steps to the platform at the end of the breakwater it was obvious that a few people were already fishing the end, but there was still room for two little ones.

We were lucky enough to locate in the middle of the platform looking out to sea, which is a relatively snag-free area. We have found that the area to the right of the platform tends to be more problematic for getting hung up on the bottom. The hotspot tends to be the front left-hand corner, where a decent chuck will put you into a tidal eddy, a prolific fish catching area. Still, all along the front of the platform provides great fishing.

If peelers aren't available it's not a disaster, as hard backs and ragworm are very good baits on there. As a compromise, we have since found that we get the best results on crinkly crabs. The technique for the hard-backs is simply to put the hook through the body (kill the crab first, obviously), then pull some pieces of the shell of and bind it the best way you can to enable casting. It looks awful yet is ridiculously effective for the smuts.

BREAKING IT DOWN

There are three sections to the breakwater as regards fishing:

The **lighthouse end** is a nice comfortable flat area, best fished two hours either side of low tide on medium sized tides. It can be snaggy close in, yet offers the chance of almost anything turning up. It's not unusual to see porpoises and seals at the end of the breakwater. My choice of tackle would be a standard beachcasting 6500 size multiplier or large fixed spool.

'The back' or 'outside' is the sea facing side of the breakwater. It's best over high tide, and is a favourite match venue. Be prepared to lose a lead a chuck, though the rewards are worth it. Heavier mainline and a 6500 multiplier or large fixed spool are the best bits of gear to use here, although it can be fished with light line and continental rods to put a bait about 120 metres out onto clean ground.

'The inside' (harbour side) of the breakwater is the regular choice for the majority of anglers, and also a great match venue, best either side of high tide. Use standard beach gear or continental tactics, or even LRF down the wall for the mini species.

PUPPY LOVE

First cast for me: a choice crinkly on 3/0 hook using a pulley rig, with a 6oz breakaway lead was lobbed about 80–100 yards, and I was straight into a starry smoothhound. It wasn't huge, but the spirit it showed in the current and the depth of water justified the trip down. It always seems to put that smile on my face – the type that you don't realise is there but everyone else can see. Priceless.

We both had a number of hounds during the session, and it's amazing that you never get bored catching them. From the smash and grab bites to taking the photos, they make just make you happy.

GOING THE DISTANCE

What we have found when fishing for them on the end is that casting that little bit further dramatically increases the hit rate. We are not talking really big distances; 30–50 yards seems to get nothing but dogfish and small stuff, but put it 80–100 yards into the tide run and the hounds seem to climb up your rod. This theory was proved as the others around us never managed a hound at all, and they were only putting in sub-50 yard casts. We had them on pulley rigs and one up one down rigs, and there didn't seem to be a favourite at all. We only fished with one rod each, but if you used two rods you could get seriously busy.

My dad hooked something very large and his rod was bent double, and this happened twice. We suspect it was a conger, but it could've been anything.

Small codling also made an appearance, and the ever-willing pollack and dogfish also gave us a bit of sport. All the fish falling to

HARD MAN

My father fished here some time ago, employing the same tactics using peelers, and a local ran across to him shouting, "No no! Don't use peelers for the smuts – it's a waste of bait". The local lad then produced a bucket full of bullet-like hard-back crabs, and said that was the bait to use, and that my dad could help himself. So he did, and it worked a treat. Who said you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

Cuckoo wrasse and other rock-loving fish are readily available – if you're willing to risk your tackle

Holyhead breakwater stretches almost two miles out into the sea

crab baits, and the fish were in great condition. Should you use fish baits, there is no doubt at all that you would be battered with dogfish, and for these pleasure sessions there is a skill to avoiding them.

We didn't manage a thornback, which was a little disappointing, as we have had some massive ones off the end in the past. They will take crab, but the usual fish baits do the trick if you can get through the dogs.

THE SEAWARD SIDE

Looking back along the breakwater it is easy to see why the outside of the venue is a tackle graveyard, with the boulders clearly visible all along its edge. The ground eases off after about 100 yards on the outside, and this is the target area for many anglers, easily managed with lighter mainline and fixed-spool reels to lift the lead up faster on the retrieve.

However, many anglers just gear up for it, using a rotten bottom and dropping a small plain lead right into the rocks and boulders. Some great fish can be had doing this, and it's definitely not for the faint hearted. You will definitely need to have a bucket of spare leads



Ben was straight into the hounds with his crinkly crab baits



Pollack are a common catch on the outside of the breakwater

TOP TIP

Boulders and rocks around the breakwater mean that losing your terminal tackle is inevitable. To minimise losses, use a weak link (or 'rotten bottom') of lighter line between your weight and rig.

THREE-BEARDED ROCKLING

One interesting species to show regularly on the outside is large three-bearded rockling, which regularly go to well over 2lb, and are a nice surprise. We have had them on full squid baits when fishing for conger on really large, heavy gauge hooks, so they aren't fussy. We keep saying we will target them as I would not be surprised to see a Welsh or British record come from here.

ready. The locals have got the technique completely sorted. We use the shop bought rotten bottom breakout clips and they work a treat.

When making your way onto the breakwater the outside of the first bend is a popular area, and can be particularly prolific for decent wrasse in the summer. It's not at all unusual to get double shots of decent wrasse on this peg, and drawing this area in a match would usually see a matchman rubbing his hands.

The rest of the outside can also turn up some great fish, with large pollack



There are some big ballan wrasse to be had close in to the harbour side

being a common occurrence. Ragworm and crab are easily amongst the best baits for most species, and squid seems to hold a fascination for many fish.

Conger and huss are also a regular catch from the back. The difficult part is getting the fish up the wall without risking life and limb, as there's a lack of safety railings. We have seen people stood on the wall handballing heavy fish up the wall, but this is a practice to avoid at all costs. We tend to tackle up for it with very strong hooks and leaders and handball or winch over the wall. There is no easy way and this tends to put people off fishing the outside.

THE HARBOUR SIDE

Looking at the harbour side, it is easy to see why this is the generally favoured spot. Matches are regularly run on here and it is not uncommon to require 120 small fish in four hours to be anywhere near the money, such is the quality of the participants. It attracts locals and internationals, and as said before world class anglers. The locals are pretty useful too.

Dogfish are always present, as are whiting. The usual techniques apply and there is no need to thump a rig miles out. However, fishing down the wall will produce as many mini species as

you can think of. Using small hooks and ragworm on short snoods will give hours of fun, particularly on light tackle or LRF equipment. I reckon 20 species off the breakwater is easily achievable in a full day.

There are some big ballan wrasse to be had within 10 yards of the wall though, as you're fishing between rocks and kelp, so this needs considering when building rigs and choosing mainline. This also produces pollack, and if you fish hard against the wall, conger will bite, though it's a waiting game and a nocturnal activity.

Rays, smuts, and bull huss also show on the inside to surprise people on a regular basis.

Mackerel can also be had during the summer months, and be warned the feather chuckers can be out in force enjoying themselves.

It's not at all unusual to catch a lobster or an octopus on the inside using rod and line.

The venue is a haven to match anglers, pleasure anglers, specimen hunters and species hunters, though a little care is required as the lack of rails on the inside of the wall is rather dangerous. ➤

At the time of writing, the Breakwater was closed to vehicular access.



COMING CLEAN

Steve Souter tidies up with the Bungee Spongee

Tatty old sponges dangling from old bits of rope have never been my favourite items on boats, not least because in the heat of serious fishing I have cast, caught and tangled with these stealth sponges. Despite my frustration, I fully accept the practicality of the 'wombat' sponge. Fishing is a messy business after all, and safe instant access to clean seawater is essential for good housekeeping.

From wiping down smeared rods, reel handles or bait boards, to sprucing live baits, the list of tasks requiring clean water and a rub up is endless. Afloat, rather than having to switch on the deck-wash every five minutes, or risk a dislocated shoulder by hanging over the side with a roped bucket, the appropriate sponge-on-a-rope offers a practical and safe solution to many ills.

WIPER AND WATER-CARRIER

Products don't come much simpler than the Bungee Spongee, which is assembled by hand in the UK. Unlike those cheap fluffy sponges, this high density, highly absorbent, expanded foam sponge sucks up and holds an impressive amount of water.

The Spongee is a generous 220mm in length by 90mm across. A 1.5 metre length of shock cord is locked with a strong plastic stop, while a hardened plastic snap-hook allows it to be attached to a rail, tackle bag, box or bucket. Large, flexible washers

made from tear-resistant, non-perishable silicon are fitted on either side and ensure the cord stays in place.

ROCKS, PIERS AND BOATS

Having slung the Spongee about on rocks, beaches and boats in all sorts of weathers for two months, I cannot bemoan its robustness or simple ability to do exactly what I need it to. It weighs very little, doesn't occupy much space, and doesn't disintegrate or rip apart within five minutes.

The Spongee takes on a lot of water when dunked and it is easy to keep clean. The ability to quickly de-muck bait-smeared hands, sticky rods and smelly buckets before putting them back in the car makes a world of difference later.

Targeting cod from the rocks with pungent, clingy baits including lugworm, crab and mussel is the mainstay of my winter fishing. This is mobile fishing where I work out of a tackle bag rather than a box, and there is no avoiding bait juice getting on the bag handle (and everything else that must be constantly moved as you hop from rock to rock or follow the tide up and down). I have taken to clipping the bungee cord to a ring on my bag and flinging the sponge in a convenient rock pool so that I can regularly wet-wipe hands and clean off knife, scissors, bait tools and tubs. This works a treat and it goes a long



It's a simple and effective concept, but the cord could be a little longer

way towards avoiding the ear-bashing that inevitably comes with falling over the front door at 4am, smelling like an old haddock.

LONGER REACH OPTION

While the Spongee is superb for everyday use, the cord could do with being a little longer, as on one occasion, while fishing aboard a larger catamaran, I struggled getting the sponge to reach the water from a mid-ships position. Pier anglers will face the same problem, and could definitely use a clip-on cord extension to cover all states of tide and different structure heights. I made this point to Leon Mead who is that man behind the product, and he is already moving to address the matter.

Note that the sponge should be pulled inboard and stowed after each use and more especially when the boat is under way. Leaving it heavily sloshing and slapping away over the side while the boat is moving encourages the cord to twist up and courts damage to the product. ➔

DETAILS

Bungee Spongee sponges cost £9.99 each from stockists and are available in various colours and shapes. Visit www.bungee-spongee.com for full product details.

A man in a black t-shirt and shorts stands on the deck of a white catamaran, holding a fishing rod. The boat is on the water, and the text 'CHEETAH MARINE' is visible on its side. The background is a clear blue sky and calm water.

TWO HULLS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Simon Everett looks at the pioneering 6.2m Catamaran that started the Cheetah empire...

In the southern seas, catamarans have been popular for angling boats for decades. The benefits are there for all to see, so why has it taken so long for those benefits to be recognised by British or European boat anglers?

When the first twin-hulled boats hit the water in this country, they were immediately slated. We Brits don't

embrace change easily, but when something new has been proven, then we seem to welcome it as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Commercial fisherman Sean Strevens saw the benefit though, when he saw the beach launched fishing catamarans coming in through the surf on a holiday to Australia, way back in the early 1980s. It

made sense; coming back onto the beach through sizable surf, when the catamaran hit the beach it remained upright where a single-hulled boat would fall on its side and get swamped. This was his 'eureka' moment and as soon as he got home he started drawing the plans for what is now the Cheetah 6.2m Catamaran and the start of an empire.



For a 20ft boat the amount of deck area is amazing



The fully equipped helm has room for additional electronics if required



There are over 160 of these 6.2m boats built and most of them are still in service. One commercial potter, who works off the beach from Ventnor, has had his 6.2m for over 20 years, working her virtually every day of the year. They are built very strong, with no corner-cutting, to give them this kind of service life. That is why they are more expensive, but then quality always shines through.

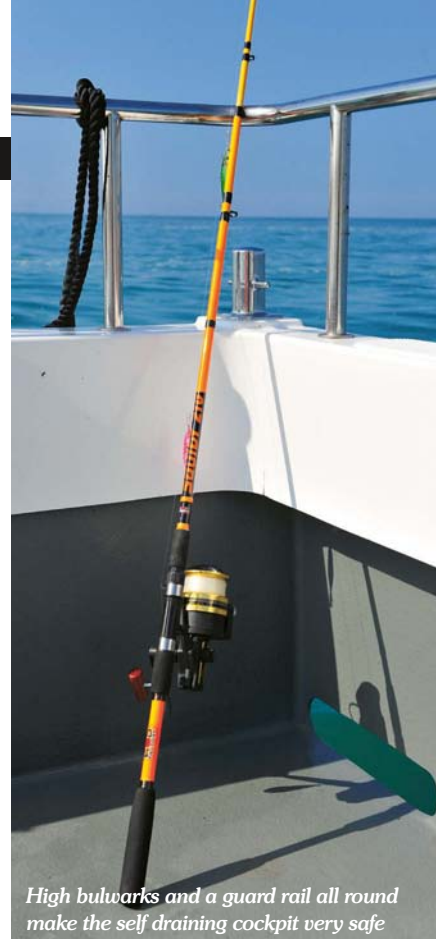
FISHING-FRIENDLY

The 6.2m is ideal as a private angling boat with her impressive seakeeping and additional deck space. The design was developed to deal with the rough waters of the St Catherine's race and the waves crashing onto the launch area of Ventnor beach. There is a harbour at Ventnor now, but when the Cheetah was first conceived there was just the open beach.

The deck area is one of the great advantages of a catamaran, that and the different ride coupled with greater stability at rest. The rolling motion of a cat is slower and less violent than a monohull of the same length. The sponsons can straddle the crest of the wave as it passes below, reducing the list angle required to ride the wave and effectively halving the amount of roll.

Although she is not classed as a wide beam cat, the Cheetah does have a wider beam than most monohulls of the length and this gives her a greater area of working deck. The forward helm gives good visibility of the sea ahead, allowing the pilot to pick their way through tricky waters and at the same time allows for a bigger cockpit.

The tunnel has been carefully designed with an extra wavebreaker to cushion the ride



High bulwarks and a guard rail all round make the self draining cockpit very safe

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATIONS:

LOA: 6.2m
Length to inner transom: 5.5m
Beam: 2.4m
Internal freeboard: 0.70m
Draft: 0.25m

PERFORMANCE FIGURES:

RPM	SPEED (knots)	Fuel litres/hr
1000	4.0	2.0
2000	8.0	3.1
3000	11.0	9.2
3500	14.1	11.5
4000	17.9	15.0
4500	20.2	20.0
5000	26.1	28.0

PRICE:

As tested with twin Honda BF40s: £43,101 incl. V.A.T.

Price does not include trailer.

CONTACT:

Cheetah Marine LLP
 Ocean Quay, Ventnor, Isle of Wight
 01983 852398
sean@cheetahmarine.co.uk
www.cheetahmarine.co.uk

OPEN COCKPIT

The completely open cockpit will easily allow six anglers to fish with room for tackle boxes and without the need to encroach on each others' space. The test boat was built with no frills in the form of cockpit seating, but there are plenty of optional extras and Cheetah Marine are always willing to incorporate special requirements for any customer. The wheelchair friendly *Wet Wheels* that has been running from Portsmouth is one such example. Fish holds, bait tanks or a rigging station are easily installed.

The wheelhouse can be lengthened too, if you prefer more enclosed accommodation and can afford to sacrifice a little cockpit length.

RIDING ROUGH SEAS

The bow of the hulls is given a low rake to provide plenty of buoyancy forward but that can lead to a boat with a tendency to yaw in a following sea. I have had one of these Cheetahs out in a fair blow with two-metre swells to play in and her sea manners are impeccable. I could even put the wheel over and turn on the front face of a wave without the boat getting out of shape. The ride seemed a little harsh into the sea, until I looked at the speed were doing, running at nearly 25 knots into those conditions, faster than most angling boats' service speed, and not

once did she dip her bow under. Air gets compressed under the tunnel providing a cushion to soften the ride and support the bows. Spray is thrown up, of course, but her ability to minimise the waves makes her punch far above her weight. When everyone else is tied up alongside, weather bound, the Cheetah can put to sea and fish happily without throwing you against the gunwale.

MANOEUVRABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

Another benefit is her ability to work in shallow water thanks to the low draft, crossing sand bars without having to wait for the tide, or reef areas can be accessed when other boats don't have sufficient water. The outboards can be raised for shallow water running and the hulls only draw a few inches.

The two motors are set far apart so manoeuvring is very easy, the engines act independently and the boat will spin on the spot using ahead and astern thrust on opposite engines without touching the wheel. The open deck is completely free draining too and the stability is such that with 10 people stood on one side only put a list of 6 degrees into the boat. This support from just one hull is down to the progressively increasing beam of each sponson, cushioning the ride and increasing the buoyancy as the hull is loaded, just like a deep V hull.

The joy of a cat is rock steady stability and massive amounts of room to fish



This catamaran design also allows for greater fuel efficiency. The tunnel reduces the wetted area and drag considerably and has been carefully developed to provide air supported lift. Upon meeting a wave the air compresses under the deck and acts as an air cushion.

The reduced wetted area for the given length and beam on a catamaran reduces the drag and allows the use of lower horsepower engines. The boat will plane at low speed, even on one engine. The 6.2m we had on test was fitted with a pair of Honda BF40 outboard motors but can run with a pair of 50s or 60s for higher performance. The fuel economy returned was less than a litre of fuel per mile

covered at 20 knots, anyone running a boat these days will appreciate the saving in running costs.

THE VERDICT

For fishing, the Cheetah offers a very stable, seaworthy and economical package. The whole boat is built out of a lightweight composite layup that makes for a very rigid boat without being overly heavy. The Honda outboards suit the Cheetah by cruising in the most fuel efficient engine speed rev range between 4200rpm and 5000rpm. This is when the economy mode engine mapping cuts in on the Honda motors, with leaner running parameters. ➤



PICK OF THE FLEET



PARKER 800 PILOTHOUSE

An outboard powered angling boat built to commercial standards in one of the largest Polish shipyards. Over 40 knots with a Verado 250 and some comfort in the wheelhouse. Expect to pay around £58,000.



PIRATE 21CC

Built in Pembrokeshire to exacting standards and with remarkable seakeeping the Pirate is a wolf in sheeps clothing. Capable of taking up to a 250hp motor that gives her over 50 knots and at around a similar budget of £48,500.



JEANNEAU MERRY FISHER 755 MARLIN

The Jeanneau Merry Fisher Marlin has an island wheelhouse with accommodation below and all round deck access. It's a good boat – for those that can afford the £100,000 price tag.

ON THE FIELD

Andy Miller brings you the latest casting results from the UK and abroad

Inclement weather and Yuletide indulgence didn't stop our tournament casters from getting out on the field to test their skills.

Surfcaster Wales held their annual Individual Championship on 30 November, sponsored by Sakuma. There were several PBs, with newly crowned champion Neil Bragg (Group 1) leading the way. Milo Bjegovic won Group 2, Ed Connick won Group 3.

Suffolk Sportcast, also held their end of year tournament on 13 December, with members' presentation of trophies won during the year, as well as member and Christmas raffle. The club extends thanks to Sakuma, Charlie Reel Bearings, Zziplex, Ultima, QTC, Fox, Zzeta, TG Rocket Fuels, and most importantly all their members who show their support all year round.

KEY

BC = Backcast, OTG = Off the Ground
PB = Personal Best, CR = Court Record
FS = Fixed Spool Reel

WEYMOUTH CASTING CLUB, DORCHESTER, DORSET

16 NOVEMBER

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Garry Dickerson	233.80	236.20	231.70	
John Hooley			235.75	
Martin Sadler		221.00		
Neil Jones			220.10	
Mark Carne		203.50		
Manny Lasco				180.29
Topper Brown		180.00	172.50	
Aran Wilkinson		175.00		

SUFFOLK SPORTCAST, PURDY'S FARM, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK

23 NOVEMBER

CONDITIONS: WET. WIND 6-9MPH N-NW.
CASTERS: 16, OF WHOM 4 DID NOT MEASURE.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Duane Lockwood (BC)	224.05		242.26	
Mike Grant		238.00	242.14	
Steve Swales	231.25	236.38	241.83	226.59
Steve Boyd (OTG)			237.98	
Lee Adams			227.00	
Martin Osbourne	220.50	219.00		216.00
Danny Stone			218.00	220.00
Rob Smith			220.00	
Ricky Nash (OTG)	198.38	203.17	196.00	198.40
Ricky Nash		201.00		
Paul Mayhew		200.10		196.00
Ron Archer		199.15		
Barry Desmond (BC)			164.00 (PB)	
CASTER	200G	300G		
Ricky Nash (OTG)	201.20			
Danny Stone		199.00		
Barry Desmond		152.00 (PB)		

KENT SPORTCAST, TILMANSTONE, KENT

30 NOVEMBER

CONDITIONS: MISTY, OVERCAST. WIND 0-8MPH WNW-NNW.
CASTERS: 15

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Jason Carter			244.95	
Martin Osbourne	208.50	224.70	215.50	210.20
Martin Osbourne (OTG)			219.70	
Danny Stone	220.00	221.00	220.80	210.25
Darren Brooks	210.00	210.00		
Tom Brooker (OTG)		196.00		
Paul Chapman (BC)		185.90		172.58
Martyn Smith (OTG)			177.60 (PB)	
CASTER	200G	300G		
Martin Osbourne	207.14			
Danny Stone	202.00			
Paul Chapman (BC)		152.00		

SURFCAST WALES, PEMBREY, CARMS

30 NOVEMBER

CONDITIONS: DRY, 12C. WIND 1-10MPH N.
CASTERS: 17

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Neil Bragg	228.70 (PB)	234.20	231.13	226.01
Meirion Pritchard		228.11	210.15	215.20
Milo Bjegovic		227.13 (PB)	204.83	211.52
Dave Thomas	211.40	223.00	204.76	
Phil Jones		219.64	208.56	
Kevin Shortman	219.35	202.69	192.95	
Brian Sillman		218.58	200.97	197.93
Neil Jones	206.38	216.57	208.88	
Barrie Davies	212.09	206.00	199.30	
Brian Sweet	201.85 (PB)	192.86	180.06	
Jerome Curtis	189.40	199.50	189.63	
Ian Williams			192.97	199.00
Lewis Brann		159.75	120.00	183.12 (PB)
Ed Connick	176.08	174.48	170.75	

SURFCAST WALES, SAKUMA INDIVIDUAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

30 NOVEMBER

AGGREGATE OF THREE LEADS. BEST CAST FROM THE THREE CASTS ON EACH LEAD TO COUNT TOWARDS THE TOTAL. 150G AND 125G COMPULSORY, WITH THE CHOICE OF EITHER THE 100G OR 175G ON THE LAST ROUND.

Group 1	Aggregate
Neil Bragg	684.78
Meirion Pritchard	646.35
Neil Jones	631.83
Group 2	
Milo Bjegovic	624.00
Barrie Davis	617.39
Kevin Shortman	614.99
Group 3	
Ed Connick	521.31
Lewis Brann	462.87

SUFFOLK SPORTCAST, PURDY'S FARM, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK

6 DECEMBER

CONDITIONS: DAMP START, BRIGHT AND COOL LATER. WIND 0-3MPH NW. CASTERS: 17, OF WHOM 3 DID NOT MEASURE.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Steve Boyt (OTG)	221.00	229.00	234.62	231.00
Kevin Southey			232.18	
Craig Buy			213.36	
Warren Jarvis			213.08	
Andy Miller		208.00		
Daniel Eagle				204.13
Paul Mayhew		202.31	204.00	195.00
Kim Tester	202.20	203.00		
Ron Archer		197.84		
Dave Andrews		194.77		
Clive Cracknell (BC)			185.20	
Dave Venables	177.97		174.06	
Alan Miller (OTG)		169.10 (PB)		
JUNIORS	75G			
Jake Mayhew (OTG)	91.00			



Danny Moeskops

SUSSEX CASTING CLUB, STEYNING, W. SUSSEX

7 DECEMBER

CONDITIONS: CLOUD, ISOLATED SHOWER. WIND 10-18MPH SW-NW. CASTERS: 14.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G
Distances in Metres			
Jason Carter	264.41	278.28	277.70
Garry Dickerson	255.28	267.70	
John Hooley	255.55	254.51	
Danny Stone		254.76	247.20
Marco Marsiglia	243.36	246.53	
Darren Brooks		240.20	
Paul Macintyre	237.70	235.50	
Kim Tester	223.30	219.00	
John South		216.70 (PB)	205.00
Howard Bishop		209.30 (PB)	210.23 (PB)
Paul Chapman (BC)			202.00
Peter Payne		170.00	

SUFFOLK

13 DECEMBER

CONDITIONS: COLD AND FROSTY START, BRIGHT LATER. WIND 0-4MPH WNW. CASTERS: 34, OF WHOM 8 DID NOT MEASURE.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Danny Moeskops		252.28	251.00	
Jason Carter			247.00	
Stephen Boyt (OTG)			237.32	
Lee Caley		233.68		
Lee Adams		233.20	225.00	
Kevin Southey		227.05	228.68	
Colin Fosker		221.45		
Wesley Lagaisse		220.30		
Ian Caley		220.23		
Chris Cannell		219.56		
Craig Buy (BC)			210.12	
Andy Miller		208.00		
Wayne Perring		207.23		
Adam Jennings		203.49		
Barry Desmond		202.00	196.00	
Dennis Retter		200.00		
Jon King			199.65	
Dave Andrews (BC)		198.50	190.00	
Paul Mayhew			198.00	195.58
Robert Wood	187.40	191.26		
Bob Murray (BC)		186.00	185.17	
Clive Cracknell (BC)			182.31	
Ben Lockwood			175.00	
Dave Venables		172.00		
Alan Miller (OTG)		171.40 (PB)		
JUNIORS	75G			
Jake Mayhew	81.00			



Barry Desmond

KENT SPORTCAST, TILMANSTONE, KENT

14 DECEMBER

CONDITIONS: DRY. WIND 3-20MPH SW.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Steve Lewis		267.00	253.60	
Danny Stone	226.00	242.30	240.50	235.20 (PB)
Mark Ward		235.20		
Darren Brooks		233.77		
Steve Crimmins (OTG)		228.00		
Derek Regan		221.10	208.70	
Mick Chapman		205.20		
John French	200.15			
Paul Chapman (BC) (FS)		192.73	185.58	
Steve Arnold (OTG)			181.00 (PB)	
Damian Hawes (OTG)				159.00 (PB)

WESTWARD CASTING ASSOCIATION, CARDINGHAM, CORNWALL

14 DECEMBER

CASTER	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Yards			
Andy Copping	295		
Adam Slack	280	272	
Matt Russell	278		
Neil Jones	261		
Varian Lea	253	250	
Wayne Harwood	247	239	
Stefan Herbert	230		
Stephen Derraven			203
Topper Brown	192		

WEYMOUTH CASTING CLUB, DORCHESTER, DORSET

21 DECEMBER

CASTERS: 13.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Yards				
Garry Dickerson	249.80	251.80	242.80	232.30
Jon Hook		248.60	235.28	
John Hooley	244.38	243.37	240.00	228.88
Paul Rogers		242.77		
Martin Sadler		226.00		
Wayne Harwood		224.98	220.10	
Sam Truan			215.00	
Phil Sylvester		211.00		
Terry Moreton		210.54	205.75	
Mark Carne		209.44		
Liam Woolgrove			202.00 (PB)	
Manny Lasco				195.40
Aran Wilkinson		178.00		



KENT SPORTCAST, TILMANSTONE, KENT

28 DECEMBER

CONDITIONS: DRY AND COLD. WIND 3-25MPH NE-ENE.

CASTERS: 14.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres				
Jason Carter		245.00	251.00	247.00
Martin Osborne	210.70	239.00 (PB)	239.00 (PB)	
Danny Stone	220.75	237.36	238.00	209.00
Duane Lockwood (BC)	208.91	229.84	236.25	229.96
Mark Ward	218.50	229.51	222.01	
Roly Cannon			215.00	
Derek Regan		201.15	199.50	
Barry Desmond		200.90 (PB)	184.00	
Tom Brooker (OTG)		200.00		
John French		197.00		
Martin Smith			156.70	

SURFCAST WALES, PEMBREY, CARMS

28 DECEMBER

CONDITIONS: DRY, 5°C. WIND 2-10MPH NE.

CASTERS: 8.

CASTER	125G	150G	175G
Distances in Metres			
Neil Bragg	226.30	224.98	220.30
Neil Jones		208.90	
Kevin Shortman (BC)	191.17		
Brian Sweet	183.01		
Brian Sweet (OTG)		178.01	
Ed Connick (OTG)		150.00	

SUSSEX CASTING CLUB, STEYNING, W. SUSSEX

4 JANUARY

CONDITIONS: COLD AND FOGGY. WIND 0-4MPH NW-N-NNE.

CASTERS: 7.

CASTER	100G	125G	150G
Distances in Metres			
Marco Marsiglia		224.90	220.00
Paul Macintyre		220.36	
Kim Tester	207.20	204.00	
John South		203.00	184.00
Howard Bishop			190.00
Peter Payne	145.00		

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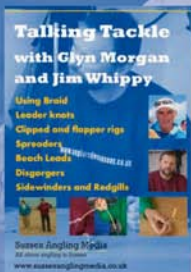
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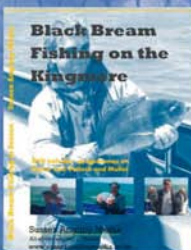
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IT'S BIG COD TIME

Glen Milligan explains the essential skills you'll need to know next time you're afloat in search of your PB cod

As winter drags on, the temperatures continue to drop and as an angler everything seems to be coming to a grinding halt. The fish, affected by the constant cold, also seem to get fed up with it all. Most disappear; some hold up in the much deeper and stable water offshore waiting for warmer, longer, brighter days.

Despite this apparently bleak outlook, all is not lost. We boat anglers still have a

realistic prize to target, as it's this time of year that we can go after the much bigger cod that are often caught inshore. This is the time to catch the cod of a lifetime, as numerous 30lb fish are routinely boated each and every January as diehard anglers refuse to slow down. All of these fish are caught on the ground, at anchor.

In some areas they are more prevalent than others, but for many these monsters aren't too far away.



BIG BAITS

For these big fish, I like to use a substantial bait. I'm looking for a big bait full of scent, mounted on large 8/0 hooks Pennel-style. Small cuttlefish, together with a couple of calamari squid and several black lugworms all added together is a good starting point. But if we're thinking about using a bait of this size then it needs to be presented properly. The aim is to get the most of the scent from the bait, also to ensure that the bait stays intact when on the bottom and finally, the bait must remain tidy when mounted on the hooks.

The cuttle and squid are both opened up beforehand to expose the guts and juices, and it's this that really helps bring the fish to the bait. They are then threaded onto the first hook and along the line to the second hook. Some of the bait is then hooked onto this top hook. Black lug is then wrapped around and into the whole cocktail. The final squid or cuttle is added to the end hook and the whole lot is then whipped together using thin bait elastic. Fine elastic does a great job forming what becomes a single cocktail bait. There's no need to try to knot the elastic – just whip it loosely and let it bind into itself by repeatedly going over each whipping.

There's no feeling like bringing aboard the nation's favourite target specie – especially a big one



TOP TIP

Big cod have big mouths, so use big baits. These will not only look delicious, but increase the amount of scent and juices in the water.

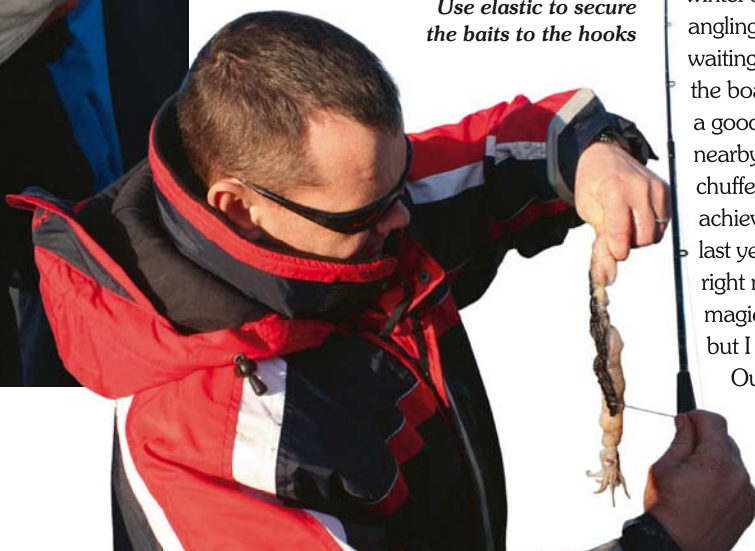
To finish off just add extra pressure and end with several tight whippings increasing pressure until the elastic snaps, it will bite into the bait. Practice is key. The end result should be a long sausage-type length of bait, that's absolutely oozing scent and oils. Both hook points should be well exposed, as it's essential that the hook points are able to penetrate the exceptionally hard, bony mouth of a big cod. These baited hooks are presented on the end of a 5ft length of 80lb mono line as a flowing trace fished hard on the bottom.

HOOKS

For hook choice, go for quality. You won't get through many hooks in a season so it's definitely worth paying for a packet of good quality hooks. These will start sharp and stay sharp, which is critical. Quality hooks will not let you down during the fight, whereas cheap hooks are very likely to fail by snapping or bending. There's nothing worse than losing a good fish to a cheap hook.

As for line, we use 80lb mono for the hook length, nothing less, not only for strength but also because cod really do have sharp teeth and will easily slice through anything lighter.

Use elastic to secure the baits to the hooks



A double-squid bait with worms whipped on can be deadly

THE WAITING GAME

With your tackle ready it is simply a matter of putting in the hours. This, for me, is proper fishing. I love cod fishing through the winter. So long as you've done some basics right then you know in your mind that it could happen at any time. It may take hours, days, or even weeks, but eventually you'll get your turn. Very often on a cold winter's day there will be a small flotilla of angling boats all anchored the same area, all waiting for their turn. Every now and then the boat's VHF radio will announce that a good fish has been caught somewhere nearby. The announcer, proud and chuffed, wants everyone to know of his achievement. On five separate occasions last year I had different boats anchored right next to me catch big cod over the magical 30lb size. A bit frustrating, true, but I knew then that it could be us next. Our turn would come.



A simple boom running ledger rig is ideal



Skipper Glen Milligan loves getting in on the action

A 20lb to 30lb class rod has the ideal action for big cod

TOP TIP

Be patient. Don't strike as soon as you feel a cod bite – let the fish hook itself before reeling in steadily.

REELING IN

When the time does come you should be ready, but don't rush it. You know that you have a very well presented bait onto sharp hooks, so give your cod a good chance to eat it. You want the fish to take the bait properly, deep.

Cod bites come in various forms, sometimes the rod just bends double, if this happens you'll have no option but to tighten up to the fish and hope that your sharp hooks sets home.

Other bites may be more cautious, a series of soft nods or taps, if this happens it's time to give some slack line from the reel and put the rod down. Years ago when fishing off the Needles at the Isle of Wight, an old boy skipper had a saying, when a cod taps it's time to put the kettle on, have a cup of tea, and only when you're finished reel into it! That's a bit extreme, but the point is still good – give the fish time.

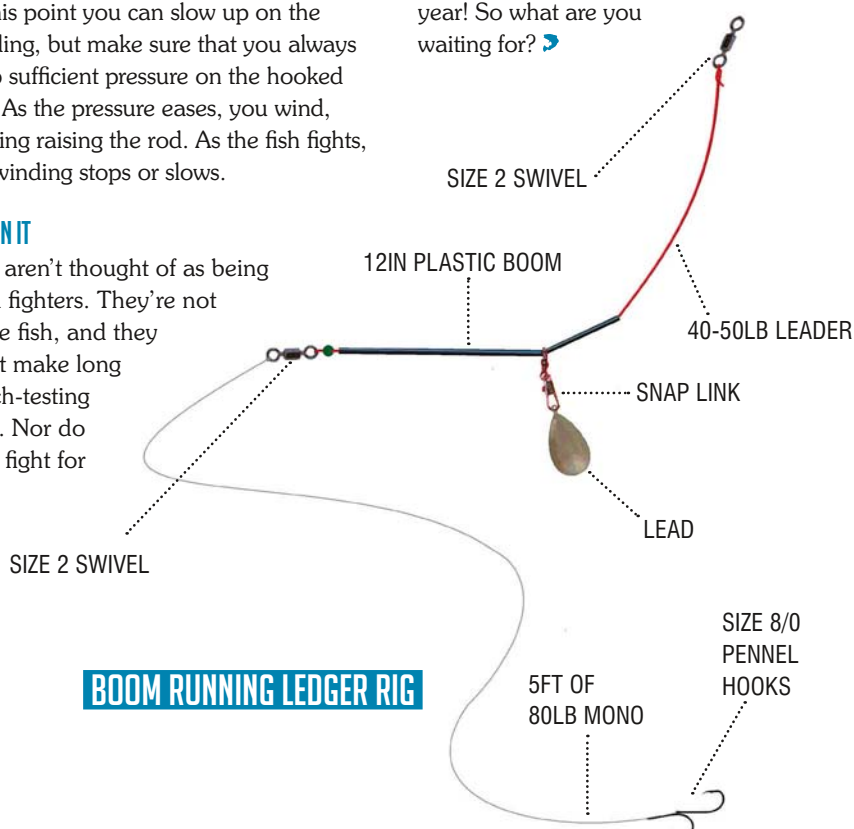
Finally when you can take it no more, reel into the biting fish – but don't strike. There's no point; what you must do is to hold the rod low pointing at the water and then reel. Keep reeling until it tightens up, and as it becomes tight raise the rod tip high and keep reeling. Don't lower it as this will ease the pressure and may allow the hooks and bait to be ejected or to be pulled free from the fish by the lead weight as it drops. As the pressure increases, hopefully you will feel the fish pull back. If it does, keep on reeling and keep the pressure on. Soon enough the fish will panic and start thrashing around. At this point you can slow up on the winding, but make sure that you always keep sufficient pressure on the hooked fish. As the pressure eases, you wind, slowing raising the rod. As the fish fights, the winding stops or slows.

GET ON IT

Cod aren't thought of as being hard fighters. They're not game fish, and they don't make long clutch-testing runs. Nor do they fight for

hours, refusing to submit. Despite that, a big cod is still a powerful beast with a huge head and a massive paddle for a tail. When caught in the tide any fish of this size is a serious heavyweight and commands respect.

A 30lb cod is a top quality fish, and a capture to be proud of. It's a real possibility at this time of year! So what are you waiting for? ➔



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Cornish capers

Frank Shaw is happily settled in his new port, but where are all the anglers?

All the hard work is done! Carrick Lee is all anti-fouled, serviced, fully equipped and ready for the season – and all the wrecks I've found or been given by mates are in my chart plotter. I must have driven a couple of thousand miles round Cornwall putting out cards and flyers in pubs, hotels, campsites and tackle shops. I've sat out at sea more winter days than ever before, trying to perfect my species skipping technique for my upcoming species competition, which starts on Good Friday and runs through until November. I've learned where to dig blow lug, collect peelers, scoop net prawns and push net shrimps – and I've probably been a customer in every pasty shop in Falmouth. My website is up and running, Facebook and Twitter are buzzing, and the calendar and booking form on www.falmouthseafishing.co.uk is all updated, ready to receive your very welcome support.

Most anglers reading this would only ever have fished Cornwall in the summertime. Visiting anglers make up a vast majority of charter boat customers, and for this reason alone many charter boats stop fishing during the winter months. It's not the cold weather, which is normally among the mildest in the UK, and it's not the wind, because any type of

westerly leaves most of Falmouth Bay more sheltered than anywhere else on the south coast. It's definitely not the fishing, because it's a time when the great big spring pollack start to arrive on the wrecks and reefs around the famous Lizard Peninsula. The winter codling are still around – there's just no people here at this time of year. It's really that simple. The locals know the secret, but they don't exactly shout about it, bless 'em. But it's a top place when the rest of the south coast of England and indeed the north coast of Cornwall are blown out or struggling for fish. That's why I've dedicated January and February to wreck and reef fishing for large pollack, codling, winter bass and the odd haddock or coalfish. Giant whiting will still be around, so bring a decent fish bag with you if you are down this way.

I've been fishing for January pollack for years, but I believe they just get overfished off my old port of Newhaven. In the last couple of years I've had to settle for less than a dozen fish per day as an average,



and a 12lb-er is a good fish indeed. The weather can shut you down along the Sussex coastline for weeks at a time, and doing 20 odd miles before you even start fishing is a pain in anyone's book. But it's not like that here. Trust me, it's well worth a visit – singles are more than welcome aboard, it couldn't be easier to book online and the fishing could be just fantastic. But here is the bonus. As a special offer for January and February 2015: no fish. no fee. If you catch absolutely nothing you get a free trip at my discretion any time during 2015.

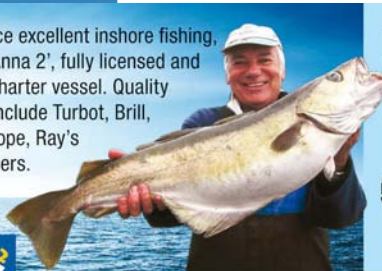
Tactics are pretty much the same here as anywhere, and Sidewinders, Red Gills and baited Hokkis are all worth a try. There doesn't seem to be as much tide as other places, so expect to anchor up a fair bit with worm and squid baits for those codling and whiting.

Remember, there's nothing worse than looking forward to a great days fishing, getting the day off from work and the missus, getting the gear ready, finding a decent boat then getting cancelled due to the weather. If it happens to you, check out Carrick Lee's calendar and come on down! ➤

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WADEBRIDGE



Light rock fishing specialists

Tel: 01208 368014

info@artoffishing.co.uk

Wadebridge, Cornwall,
PL27 7AD



ANOTHER FINE MESS YOU'VE GOTTEN ME INTO

Laurel, Hardy, and **Sam Harris MBE**. What could possibly go wrong?

As a teenager, I was a member of the Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade, which is an organisation manned by volunteers who, with the use of breeches buoys, attempted to rescue the crews and passengers of ships which had run aground, normally by breakdowns or stormy seas. The Tynemouth Brigade was the very first of this kind of organisation in the world.

On the night of 26 February 1947 the Greek Steamer *SS Zephyrus* dragged her anchor in a huge storm and was driven onto the rocks at Browns Bay, Cullercoats. The crew aboard sent up every rocket they had – irrespective of colour.

At the time, we were all in the Watch House at Tynemouth and to summon more of our volunteers, rockets were sent up. We didn't have fancy pagers or mobile phones

in those days. All of our equipment was on a big hand cart, which had to be dragged manually. Running along the sea front towards the wreck, as we drew level with the Grand Hotel at Tynemouth where all of the guests and staff were standing on the stairs watching the 'firework display' that was going up, one of our members suddenly noticed that, among the crowd, were the famous comedy duo, Laurel and Hardy. We immediately stopped pulling the cart and some of our members even went and asked for autographs.

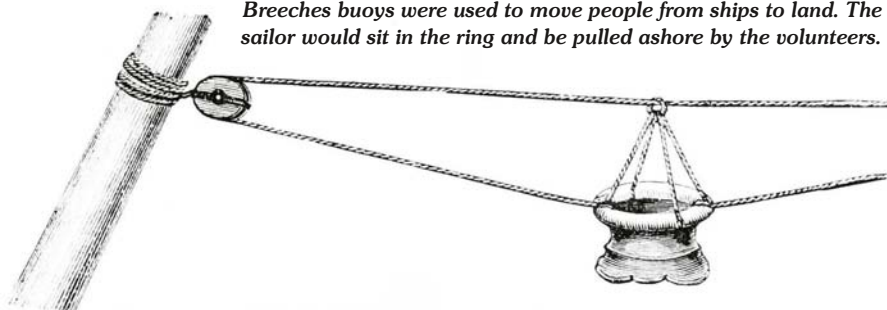
In the meantime, our captain in charge was just about having a heart attack and doing a war dance in the middle of the road – and screaming at us that people were, in fact, drowning. When we eventually arrived at Marconi Point, which gave us the ideal position to put a breeches

buoy onto the ship, the cart was unloaded and the first attempt to fire the light line onto the ship by rocket was blown away by the gale. After another three attempts, we eventually managed to get the light rope onboard and, at the other end of the light rope was the main hawser. The idea is that the crew on the stricken vessel pull the light rope across and then attach the main hawser to one of the masts or something similar. The breeches buoy is then sent across and then, hopefully, the rescue can start. While all of this was going on, rain was pouring down, the wind was howling and we were all soaked to the skin ... and annoyed that we didn't get Laurel and Hardy's autographs. Eventually we got one of the first of the crew ashore.

By this time, dawn was breaking and one of our members happened to look over the edge of the cliff and, when we all had a look, the tide had gone out and the *SS Zephyrus* was high and dry!

The remainder of the ship's crew climbed down ladders and walked ashore... and that was another fine mess we got ourselves into. ➤

Breeches buoys were used to move people from ships to land. The sailor would sit in the ring and be pulled ashore by the volunteers.



Sea Rods

Aurora 12' Beachcaster



Jarvis Walker Sovereign Boat Range



Jarvis Walker Sovereign 12' Beach Rod



Jarvis Walker Sovereign 5 piece Bass Rod



Rovex Big Boss Bass Rod



Rovex Big Boss Beach Series



Rovex Ceratc Beach Rod Series



Rovex Integra Gold Boat Rods



Rovex Magnite Pro Series



Rovex Tideline Boat Rod



Sea Reels

Jarvis Walker En 650 Spinning Fixed Spool Reel



Jarvis Walker En 850 Beach Fixed Spool Reel



Jarvis Walker En 950 Beach Fixed Spool Reel



Jarvis Walker Oberon Mag Brake Bailcaster



Jarvis Walker Scorpion Bailcaster Mag Brakes



Jarvis Walker Scorpion Zx6500 Bailcaster



Sovereign Fixed Spool Reel



Rovex Cmr 1815 Uptide Level Wind Multiplier



Rovex Airstrike Fixed Spool Reels



Rovex Altus Level Wind Boat Reel



Rovex Big Boss 2 Fixed Spool



Rovex Ceratc 588 1000 and 2000



Rovex Ceratc 588 3000 to 6000



Rovex Nexium Front Drag Spinning Reels



Rovex Tideline Multiplier Boat Reel And Braid



Rovex Verona Beach and Spin Reel



Hooks

Tsunami Baitkeeper Hooks Small Packs



Tsunami Black Baitkeeper Hooks Boxes Of 25



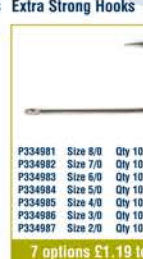
Tsunami Black Long Shank Hooks In 25's



Tsunami Black Mako Extra Strong Aberdeen Hooks Box 25's



Tsunami Black Mako Extra Strong Hooks



Tsunami Black Mako Strong Sea Aberdeen Hooks Box 25's



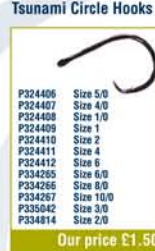
Tsunami Black O'Shaunessy Hooks



Tsunami Black Wide Gape Kirby



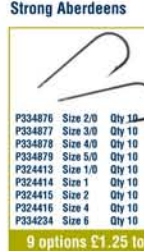
Tsunami Circle Hooks



Tsunami Long Shank Hooks



Tsunami Mako Black Strong Aberdeens



Tsunami Saltwater Trebbles



Tsunami Wide Gape Kirby Box 25



Scales

Rovex Fish Grip and Scales and Thermometer



Braid

Rovex Airstrike Braid



Rovex Tergo Braided Line



Rovex Viros Braid Line Chartreuse



Rovex Viros Braid Line Green



Sea Line

Jarvis Walker Steel Trace Wire With Crimps 20lb To 100lb



Rig Clips

Tsunami Lead Links



Sea Accessories

Jarvis Walker Bait Bucket with Waist Strap



P334431

Our price: £2.50

Jarvis Walker Rod Straps



P334430

Our price: £1.50

Tec Tackle Reel Grease



P327811

Our price: £1.99

Jarvis Walker Tungsten Carbide Knife Sharpener



P334161

Our price: £2.49

Tec Tackle Reel Oil



P328209

Our price: £1.99

Jarvis Walker Sunglasses with case and Belt Clip



P335051 Tortoise Brown
P335052 Black Bent Arm Grey
P335053 Black Bent Arm Brown
P335054 Black Straight Arm Grey
P335055 Black Straight Arm Brown
P335056 Black Straight Arm Blue
P335057 Clip On Grey
P335058 Clip On Brown

Our price: £9.99

Tec Tackle Rod Eye Repair Kit



P327834

Our price: £3.99

Tec Tools 2 Speed Aerator



P327803

Our price: £8.99

Tec Tools Hook Sharpener



P334823

Our price: £0.99

Tec Tools Knife Sharpener



P327899

Our price: £1.79

Tectackle Luminous Rod Bell



P327061

Our price: £0.79

Swivels

Tsunami Black Barrel Bulk Value Pack



P334771 Size 1 8/5 119lb Qty 30
P334772 Size 2 8/5 108lb Qty 38
P334773 Size 4 8/5 50lb Qty 45
P334774 Size 6 8/5 70lb Qty 50
P334775 Size 8 8/5 65lb Qty 55
P334776 Size 10 8/5 62lb Qty 70
P334777 Size 12 8/5 30lb Qty 80
P334778 Size 12 8/5 12lb Qty 100

Our price: £2.49

Tsunami Black Interlock Snap Swivel Value Packs



P335031 Size 1 8/5 72lb Qty 16
P335032 Size 2 8/5 52lb Qty 20
P335033 Size 4 8/5 32lb Qty 25
P335034 Size 5 8/5 32lb Qty 28
P335035 Size 6 8/5 35lb Qty 30
P335036 Size 8 8/5 35lb Qty 40
P335037 Size 10 8/5 30lb Qty 50
P335038 Size 12 8/5 20lb Qty 55

Our price: £2.25

Tsunami Black Rolling Swivels



P324399 Size 3/0 8/5 175lb Qty 5
P324400 Size 2/0 8/5 140lb Qty 7
P324401 Size 1/0 8/5 120lb Qty 12
P324402 Size 1 8/5 100lb Qty 15
P324403 Size 2 8/5 75lb Qty 20
P324404 Size 4 8/5 60lb Qty 25
P324405 Size 5 8/5 50lb Qty 25
P324417 Size 10 8/5 17lb Qty 30
P324418 Size 12 8/5 15lb Qty 25
P324419 Size 6 8/5 40lb Qty 30
P324420 Size 14 8/5 13lb Qty 25
P324421 Size 16 8/5 20lb Qty 35

Our price: £1.50

Tsunami Black Snap Swivels



P324952 Size 6 Qty 15 8/5 35lb
P324953 Size 4 Qty 12 8/5 52lb
P324954 Size 1 Qty 8 8/5 72lb
P324955 Size 2/0 Qty 4 8/5 82lb
P335017 Size 10 Qty 20 8/5 23lb
P335018 Size 2 Qty 10 8/5 52lb
P335019 Size 1/0 Qty 5 8/5 72lb
P335020 Size 12 Qty 25 8/5 20lb
P335021 Size 5 Qty 12 8/5 52lb
P335022 Size 16 Qty 25 8/5 17lb
P324958 Size 8 Qty 18 8/5 35lb
P335344 Size 14 Qty 25 8/5 20lb

Our price: £1.50

Tsunami Rolling Swivels



P334779 Size 2/0 8/5 137lb Qty 8
P334780 Size 1/0 8/5 135lb Qty 10
P334781 Size 1 8/5 119lb Qty 12
P334782 Size 2 8/5 108lb Qty 15
P334783 Size 4 8/5 50lb Qty 20
P334784 Size 5 8/5 70lb Qty 25
P334785 Size 6 8/5 65lb Qty 25
P334786 Size 8 8/5 62lb Qty 30
P334787 Size 10 8/5 35lb Qty 30
P334788 Size 12 8/5 25lb Qty 40
P334789 Size 14 8/5 23lb Qty 40
P334790 Size 16 8/5 17lb Qty 40

Our price: £1.50

Tsunami Black Rolling Swivels With Coastlock Snap



P334734 Size 8 Qty 16 8/5 15lb
P334735 Size 10 Qty 20 8/5 20lb
P334736 Size 12 Qty 14 8/5 13lb
P324812 Size 5 Qty 15 8/5 50lb
P324813 Size 4 Qty 15 8/5 60lb
P324814 Size 2 Qty 12 8/5 75lb
P324815 Size 1 Qty 8 8/5 100lb
P324816 Size 1/0 Qty 5 8/5 120lb

Our price: £1.50

Tsunami Match Swivels



P335014 Size 6 8/5 40lb
P335015 Size 8 8/5 20lb
P335016 Size 10 8/5 17lb

Our price: £1.20

Tsunami Crossline 3 Way Swivels



P335023 Size 2/0 8/5 137lb Qty 5
P335024 Size 1/0 8/5 135lb Qty 8
P335025 Size 1 8/5 119lb Qty 8
P335026 Size 2 8/5 108lb Qty 10
P335027 Size 4 8/5 50lb Qty 15
P335028 Size 5 8/5 65lb Qty 20
P335029 Size 6 8/5 62lb Qty 25
P335030 Size 10 8/5 35lb Qty 26

Our price: £1.50

Beads

Rigging Pearls



P327769 3mm
P327770 4mm
P327771 5mm
P327772 8mm

Our price £0.90

Tsunami 4 Way Beads Clear or Lumi



P335656 4mm Lumi Green
P335657 5mm Lumi Green
P327778 Small Clear

Our price £0.95

Tsunami 5mm Rubber Beads



P324951 5mm Black

Our price £0.99

Tsunami Luminous Glowing Oval Beads



P327062 4mm Pkt 100
P327063 5mm Pkt 100
P327064 8mm Pkt 50

Our price £0.95

Tsunami Lumo Beads



P327773 5mm Green
P327774 8mm Green

Our price £0.50

Tsunami Plaiice Beads



P327775 6mm

Our price £1.25

Tsunami Pop Up Beads



P327776 5mm
P327777 8mm

Our price £1.25

Tsunami Pre Threaded Floating Beads



P327781 Orange Oval 2 x 5
P327782 Luminous Oval 2 x 5
P327783 Orange Round 2 x 5
P327784 Orange Oval 2 x 5

Our price £1.25

Tsunami Range of Rig Making Beads 5mm & 8mm



P327759 5mm Assorted Colours
P327761 8mm Assorted Colours

Our price £0.50

ROVEX® Rovex 10x High Abrasion Bulk Mono



£14.99 each or any 2 for £26.00

Code	LBS	Length	Colour	Price
P327819	14lb	302m	Yellow	£14.99
P327820	19lb	221m	Yellow	£14.99
P327821	24lb	169m	Yellow	£14.99
P338412	14lb	302m	Red	£14.99
P338413	19lb	221m	Red	£14.99
P338414	24lb	169m	Red	£14.99
P338415	14lb	302m	Clear	£14.99
P338416	19lb	221m	Clear	£14.99
P338417	24lb	169m	Clear	£14.99

ULTIMATE ABRASION RESISTANCE! Rovex's 10X Formula line is made using an exclusive polymer bonding technology for unsurpassed abrasion resistance that makes it first choice for anglers fishing over rocks, wrecks, snags and other obstacles. With great knot strength this material was called 10X because we found it 10 times more abrasion resistant than other material tested!

ROVEX® Rovex Surf Shock Leader



Abrasion resistant co-polymer with high knot strength, easy handling clear shock leader in 50m spools.

£2.75 Buy 4 for £9.00

Code	LBS	Colour	Code	LBS	Colour
P324396	50lb	Clear	P334436	50lb	Hi V Yellow
P324397	60lb	Clear	P334437	55lb	Hi V Yellow
P324398	70lb	Clear	P334438	60lb	Hi V Yellow
P324422	55lb	Clear	P334439	70lb	Hi V Yellow

ROVEX® Rovex Clear Mono Leader up to 150lbs 100m Spools



PREMIUM CLEAR NYLON MONO LEADER! Rovex Mono Leader is made using state-of-the-art copolymer nylon technology to create a reliable and durable mono leader with an excellent strength-to-diameter ratio. It's easy to handle and to tie knots with. The knot strength and crimp strength have made it very popular among serious sport and gamelishers who demand a tough leader that can land the world's biggest fish. All in 100m Spools

From £3.99

Code	LBS	Price
P334314	40lb	£3.99
P334315	60lb	£3.99
P334316	80lb	£3.99
P334317	100lb	£3.99
P334318	150lb	£4.99

ROVEX® Rovex Devil Bulk Mono



Rovex Devil Fibre General Purpose Mono Jumbo Spools. Dependable Rovex Devil line is an affordable monofilament with a good overall performance suited to all fishing styles. Devil line combines strength, flexibility and limpness to enhance casting. These big spools offer big value for money and are available in Red, Clear or "Neon" Yellow.

£3.99 buy any 4 spools for £9.00

Code	LBS	Colour	Length	Diameter	Code	LBS	Colour	Length	Diameter
P323083	12lb	Clear	1200yds	0.33mm	P327057	25lb	Yellow	670yds	0.45mm
P323105	15lb	Clear	1100yds	0.35mm	P327058	30lb	Yellow	535yds	0.50mm
P323082	18lb	Clear	960yds	0.37mm	P334544	40lb	Yellow	370yds	0.60 mm
P324949	20lb	Clear	840yds	0.40mm	P324545	50lb	Yellow	270yds	0.70 mm
P324950	25lb	Clear	670yds	0.45mm	P338379	12lb	Red	1200yds	0.33mm
P327054	30lb	Clear	535yds	0.50mm	P338380	15lb	Red	1100yds	0.35mm
P334579	40lb	Clear	370yds	0.60 mm	P338381	18lb	Red	960yds	0.37mm
P334580	50lb	Clear	275yds	0.70 mm	P338382	20lb	Red	840yds	0.40mm
P323081	15lb	Yellow	1100yds	0.35mm	P338383	25lb	Red	670yds	0.45mm
P327055	18lb	Yellow	960yds	0.37mm	P338384	30lb	Red	535yds	0.50mm
P327056	20lb	Yellow	840yds	0.40mm	P338385	40lb	Red	370yds	0.60 mm

Rovex Surf Tournament Shock Leader 150m



For fishermen who take their Surf casting seriously, this leader material is for you! Coated with silicone to assist with longer casts, Rovex Surf Tournament Leader is made from high grade copolymer. Also features excellent abrasion resistance and knot strength.

£4.99 Buy any 2 for £8.00

Code	LBS	Colour	Code	LBS	Colour
P334581	50lb	Clear	P334584	50lb	Yellow
P334582	60lb	Clear	P334585	60lb	Yellow
P334583	80lb	Clear	P334586	80lb	Yellow

Crimps

Tsunami Double Crimps



P334224 1.4mm
P334225 1.6mm
P334226 2.0mm
P334227 2.2mm

Our Price £0.99

Tsunami Oval Alloy Crimps



P334964 1.0mm
P334965 1.2mm
P334966 1.4mm
P334967 1.6mm

Our Price £0.99

Tsunami Rig and Match Crimps

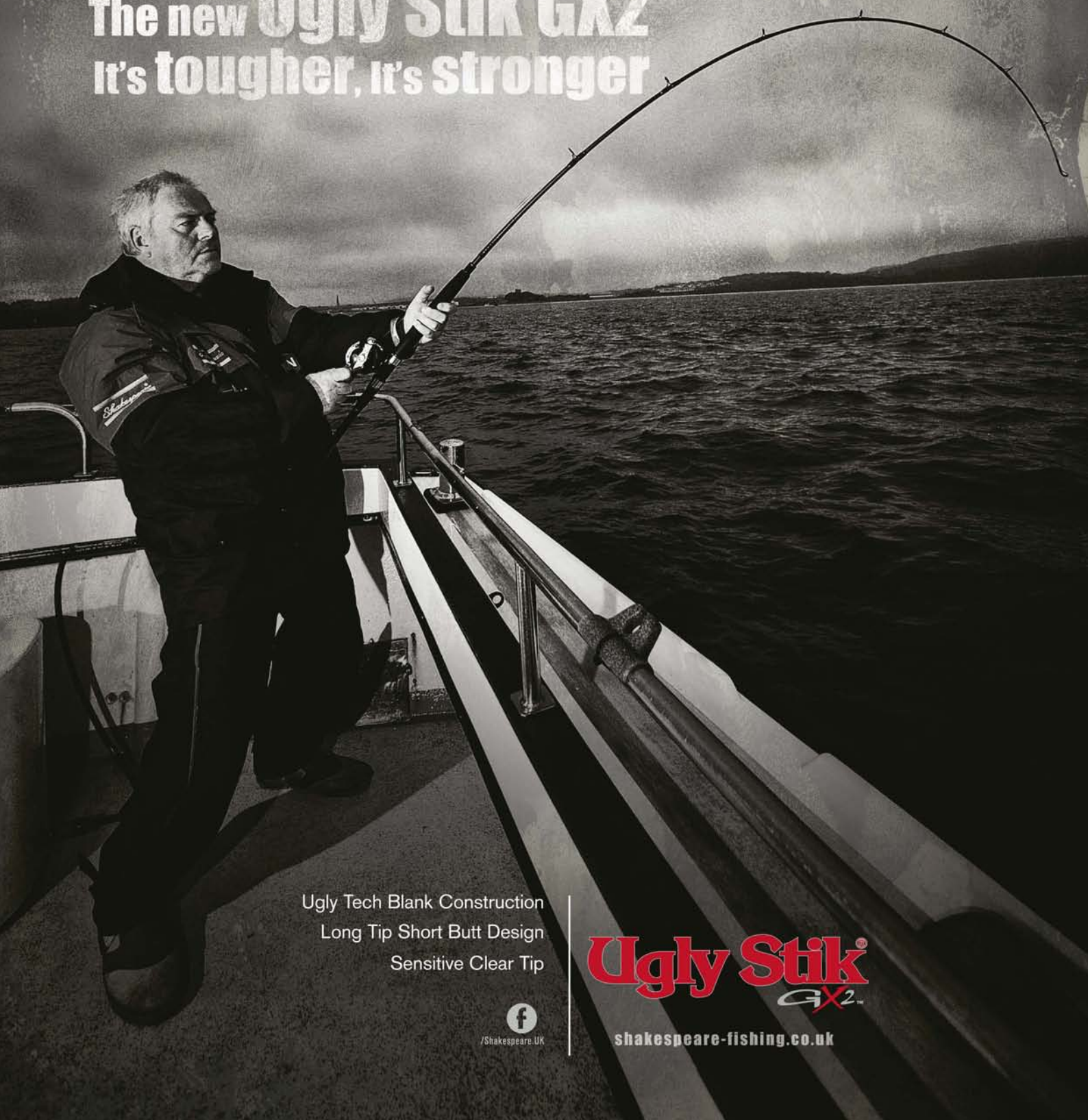


P334834 0.8mm
P334835 1.2mm
P334836 1.6mm
P334837 2.0mm
P334838 1.1mm

Our Price £0.99

It's an ugly thing

The new **Ugly Stik GX2**
It's tougher, it's stronger



Ugly Tech Blank Construction
Long Tip Short Butt Design
Sensitive Clear Tip



/Shakespeare.UK

Ugly Stik
GX2

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